Toni the Little Wood-carver

by

Johanna Spyri

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/tonilittlewoodca0000joha

TONI
THE LITTLE WOOD-CARVER

TONI
THE LITTLE WOOD-CARVER
and Other Stories

BY

JOHANNA SPYRI

(Author of "Heidi" & "Gritli's Children.")

Translated by

HELEN B. DOLE

GROSSET & DUNLAP, Publishers

NEW YORK

RAPPAHANNOCK
LIBRARY

Copyright, 1916, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1925
By GROSSET & DUNLAP, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

TONI, THE LITTLE WOOD-CARVER — PAGE

I. AT HOME IN THE LITTLE STONE HUT . . 1
II. A HARD SENTENCE 10
III. UP IN THE MOUNTAINS 17
IV. IN THE SANITARIUM 28

LITTLE CURLY-HEAD

I. AT WILLOW-JOSEPH'S HOUSE 42
II. NEW ACQUAINTANCES 51
III. WHAT KEEPING SILENT DOES 61
IV. WHAT THE DEAR LORD SENDS 72
V. CHRISTMAS 81

THE ROSE-CHILD

I. THE TIME OF ROSES 97
II. A LITTLE HELPER AND GREAT HELP . . . 102
III. ROSE-RESLI'S TROUBLE 111
IV. SORROW-MOTHER NO LONGER 117

THE CHILDREN'S CAROL

I. BASTI AND FRANZELI LEARN A SONG . . . 127
II. UNEXPECTED NEW YEAR'S SINGERS . . . 136
III. ONE SURPRISE AFTER ANOTHER 150

LITTLE MISS GRASSHOPPER

I. BEFORE THE JOURNEY 158
II. ON THE GEMMI PASS 162
III. NEW ACQUAINTANCES 167
IV. A TERRIBLE NIGHT 174
V. THE NEXT MORNING 180

Toni, the Little Wood-Carver

I

AT HOME IN THE LITTLE STONE HUT

HIGH up in the Bernese Oberland, quite a distance above the meadow-encircled hamlet of Kandergrund, stands a little lonely hut, under the shadow of an old fir-tree. Not far away rushes down from the wooded heights of rock the Wild brook, which in times of heavy rains has carried away so many rocks and bowlders that when the storms are ended a ragged mass of stones is left, through which flows a swift, clear stream of water. Therefore the little dwelling near by this brook is called the stone hut.

Here lived the honest day-laborer Toni, who conducted himself well in every farmhouse where he went to work, for he was quiet and industrious, punctual at his tasks, and reliable in every way.

In his hut at home he had a young wife and a little boy, who was a joy to both of them. Near the hut in the little shed was the goat, the milk of which supplied food for the mother and child, while the father received his board through the week on the farms where he worked from morning until night. Only on Sunday was he at home with his wife and little Toni. The wife Elsbeth kept her little house in good order; it was narrow and

tiny, but it always looked so clean and cheerful that every one liked to come into the sunny room, and the father, Toni, was never so happy as when he was at home in the stone hut with his little boy on his knee.

For five years the family lived in harmony and undisturbed peace. Although they had no abundance and little worldly goods, they were happy and content. The husband earned enough, so they did not suffer want, and they desired nothing beyond their simple manner of life, for they loved each other and their greatest delight was little Toni.

The little boy grew strong and healthy and with his merry ways delighted his father's heart, when he remained at home on Sundays, and sweetened all his mother's work on week-days, when his father was away until late in the evening.

Little Toni was now four years old and already knew how to be helpful in all sorts of small ways, in the house and the goat's shed and also in the field behind the hut. From morning until night he tripped happily behind his mother for he was as content as the little birds up in the old fir-tree.

When Saturday night came the mother scrubbed and cleaned with doubled energy to finish early, for on that day the father was through his work earlier than other days, and she always went with little Toni by the hand, part way to meet him. This was a great delight to the child. He now knew very well how one task followed another in the household. When his mother began to

scrub, he jumped around in the room with delight and cried out again and again: "Now we are going for Father! Now we are going for Father!" until the moment came when his mother took him by the hand and started along.

Saturday evening had come again in the lovely month of May. Outdoors the birds in the trees were singing merrily up to the blue sky; indoors the mother was cleaning busily, in order to get out early into the golden evening, and meanwhile now outside, now in the house, little Toni was hopping around and shouting:

"Now we are going for Father!"

It was not long before the work was finished. The mother put on her shawl, tied on her best apron and stepped out of the house.

Toni jumped for joy and ran three times around his mother, then seized her hand and shouted once more:

"Now we are going for Father!"

Then he tripped along beside his mother in the lovely, sunny evening. They wandered to the Wild brook, over the wooden bridge, which crosses it, and came to the narrow foot-path, winding up through the flower-laden meadows to the farm where the father worked.

The last rays of the setting sun fell across the meadows and the sound of the evening bells came up from Kandergrund.

The mother stood still and folded her hands.

"Lay your hands together, Toneli," she said, "it is the Angelus."

The child obeyed.

"What must I pray, Mother?" he asked.

"Give us and all tired people a blessed Sunday! Amen!" said the mother devoutly.

Toneli repeated the prayer. Suddenly he screamed: "Father is coming!"

Down from the farm some one was running as fast as he could come.

"That is not Father," said his mother, and both went towards the running man. When they met, the man stood still and said, gasping:

"Don't go any farther; turn around, Elsbeth. I came straight to you, for something has happened."

"Oh, my God!" cried the woman in the greatest anguish, "has something happened to Toni?"

"Yes, he was with the wood-cutters, and then he was struck. They have brought him back; he is lying up at the farm—but don't go up there," he added, holding Elsbeth fast, for she wanted to start off as soon as she heard the news.

"Not go up?" she said quickly. "I must go to him; I must help him and see about bringing him home."

"You cannot help him, he is—he is already dead," said the messenger in an unsteady voice. Then he turned and ran back again, glad to have the message off his mind.

Elsbeth threw herself down on a stone by the way, unable to stand or to walk. She held her apron before her face and burst into weeping and sobbing, so that

Toneli was distressed and frightened. He pressed close to his mother and began to cry too.

It was already dark when Elsbeth finally came to herself and could think of her child. The little one was still sitting beside her on the ground, with both hands pressed to his eyes, and sobbing pitifully. His mother lifted him up.

"Come, Toneli, we must go home; it is late," she said, taking him by the hand. But he resisted.

"No, no, we must wait for Father!" he said and pulled his mother back.

Again she could not keep back the tears. "Oh, Toneli, Father will come no more," she said, stifling her sobs; "he is already enjoying the blessed Sunday, we prayed for, for the weary. See, the dear Lord has taken him to Heaven; it is so beautiful there, he will prefer to stay there."

"Then we will go too," replied Toneli, starting along.

"Yes, yes, we shall go there too," promised his mother, "but now we must first go home to the stone hut," and without a word she went with the little one back to the silent cottage.

The proprietor of the Matten farm sent word to Elsbeth the following day that he would do everything necessary for her husband, and so she need not come until it was time for the service, for she would not recognize her husband. He sent her some money in order that she would not have too much care in the next few days, and promised to think of her later on.

Elsbeth did as he advised and remained at home until the bells in Kandergrund rang for the service. Then she went to accompany her husband to his resting place.

Sad and hard days came for Elsbeth. She missed her good, kind husband everywhere, and felt quite lost without him. Besides, cares came now which she had known little about before, for her husband had had his good, daily work. But now she felt sometimes as if she would almost despair. She had nothing but her goat and the little potato field behind the cottage, and from these she had to feed and clothe herself and the little one, and besides furnish rent for the little house.

Elsbeth had only one consolation, but one that always supported her when pain and care oppressed her; she could pray, and although often in the midst of tears, still always with the firm belief that the dear Lord would hear her supplication.

When at night she had put little Toni in his tiny bed she would kneel down beside him and repeat aloud the old hymn, which now came from the depths of her heart, as never before:

Oh, God of Love, oh Father-heart,
  In whom my trust is founded,
I know full well how good Thou art—
  E'en when by grief I am wounded.

Oh Lord, it surely can not be
  That Thou wilt let me languish
In hopeless depths of misery,
  And live in tears of anguish.

Oh Lord, my soul yearns for Thine aid
In this dark vale of weeping;
For Thee I've waited, hoped and prayed
Assured of Thy safe keeping.

Lord let me bear whate'er Thy Love
May send of grief or sorrow,
Until Thou, in Thy Heaven above,
Make dawn a brighter morrow.

And in the midst of her urgent praying, the mother's tears flowed abundantly, and little Toni, deeply moved in his heart by his mother's weeping and earnest prayer, kept his hands folded and wept softly too.

So the time passed. Elsbeth struggled along and little Toni was able to help her in many ways, for he was now seven years old. He was his mother's only joy, and she was able to take delight in him for he was obedient and willing to do everything she desired. He had always been so inseparable from his mother that he knew exactly how the tasks of the day had to be done, and he desired nothing but to help her whenever he could. If she was working in the little field, he squatted beside her, pulled out the weeds, and threw the stones across the path.

If his mother was taking the goat out of the shed so that she could nibble the grass around the hut, he went with her step by step, for his mother had told him he must watch her so that she would not run away.

If his mother was sitting in winter by her spinning-wheel, he sat the whole time beside her, mending his win-

ter shoes with strong strips of cloth, as she had taught him to do. He had no greater wish than to see his mother happy and contented. His greatest pleasure was, when Sunday came and she was resting from all work, to sit with her on the little wooden bench in front of the house and listen as she told him about his father and talk with her about all kinds of things.

But now the time had come for Toni to go to school. It was very hard for him to leave his mother and remain away from her so much. The long way down to Kandergrund and up again took so much time that Toni was hardly ever with his mother any more through the day, but only in the evening. Indeed he always came home so quickly that she could hardly believe it possible, for he looked forward with pleasure all day long to getting home again. He lost no time with his schoolmates but ran immediately away from them as soon as school was over. He was not accustomed to the ways of the other boys since he had been constantly alone with his quietly working mother and used to performing definite tasks continually without any noise.

So it was altogether strange to him and he took no pleasure in it when the boys, coming out of the schoolhouse, set up a great screaming, one running after another, trying to see which was the stronger, and throwing one another on the ground, or wrestling so that their caps were thrown far away and their jackets half torn off.

The wrestlers would often call to him:

" Come and play! " and when he ran away from them they would call after him: " You are a coward." But this made little difference to him; he didn't hear it long, for he ran with all his might in order to be at home again with his mother.

Now a new interest for him arose in the school: he had seen beautiful animals drawn on white sheets, which the children of the upper classes copied. He quickly tried to draw them, too, with his pencil and at home continued drawing the animals again and again as long as he had a bit of paper. Then he cut out the animals and tried to make them stand on the table, but this he could not do. Then suddenly the thought came to him that if they were of wood they could stand. He began quickly with his knife to cut around on a little piece of wood until there was a body and four legs; but the wood was not large enough for the neck and the head; so he had to take another piece and calculate from the beginning how high it must be and where the head must be placed. So Toni cut away with much perseverance until he succeeded in making something like a goat and could show it with great satisfaction to his mother. She was much delighted at his skill and said:

" You are surely going to be a wood-carver, and a very good one."

From that time on Toni looked at every little piece of wood which came in his way, to see if it would be good for carving, and if so he would quickly put it away, so that he often brought home all his pockets full

of these pieces, which he then collected like treasures into a pile and spent every free moment carving them.

Thus the years passed by. Although Elsbeth always had many cares, she experienced only joy in her Toni. He still clung to her with the same love, helped her in every way as well as he could, and spent his life beside her entirely at his quiet occupation, in which he gradually acquired a quite gratifying skill. Toni was never so content as when he was sitting in the little stone hut with his carving and his mother came in and out happily employed, always saying a kindly word to him and finally sat down beside him at her spinning-wheel.

II

A HARD SENTENCE

Toni was twelve years old in the winter, and now his school days were over, and the time had come to look about for some kind of work which would bring him in some money and by which he could learn something necessary for future years.

Spring had come and work had begun in the fields. His mother thought it would be best to ask the proprietor of the Matten farm if he had some light work for Toni; but every time she spoke about it he would say beseechingly:

"Oh, Mother, don't do that; let me be a wood-carver!"

She would have had no objection to this, but knew no way to bring it about, and she had known the farmer up on the Matten farm ever since her husband had worked there, and ever since his death from time to time he had sent her a little wood or meal.

She hoped that he would employ Toni at first for light tasks in the field, so that he would gradually learn to do the heavier work.

So on Saturday night after the day's work was ended and she sat down with Toni to their scanty supper, she said once more:

"Toni, now we must take a decided step; I think it is best for me to go up to the Matten farm to-morrow."

"Oh, Mother, don't do that!" said Toni, quite beseechingly. "Don't go to the farmer! If you will only let me be a wood-carver, I will work so hard, that I will earn enough, and you will not have to do so much, and then I can stay at home with you. Besides you would be all alone, and I can't bear it, if I have to be always away from you. Let me stay with you; don't send me away, Mother."

"Oh, you good Toni," said his mother, "what wouldn't I give to be able to keep you always with me! But that really cannot be. I know of no way for you to be a wood-carver; some one would have to teach you, and when you had learned, how should we sell the carvings? You would have to know people and go about, or else your work wouldn't bring any money. If only I

could talk with some one, who could give me good advice!"

"Don't you know any one, Mother, you can ask?" said Toni anxiously and racked his brain to try to think of some one. His mother too began to consider.

"I think I will go to the pastor, who has already given me advice," said his mother, delighted to have found a way out of the difficulty.

Toni was quite happy and now was determined that early the next morning they should go down to the church and then his mother could go in to see the pastor and Toni would wait outside.

Everything was carried out on Sunday morning as they had planned. His mother had put two of the little carved animals in her pocket to show the pastor as examples of her boy's good ability. The pastor received her very cordially, had her sit down beside him and enquired with interest about her affairs, for he knew Elsbeth and how bravely she had helped herself through all the hard times.

She told him now the whole story, how Toni from a very early age had worked at the carving with so much interest and now wished for nothing so much as to carry on this work, but how she knew of no way for him to learn, nor how, later, the work could be sold. Finally she showed him the two little animals as examples of Toni's skill.

The pastor replied to the mother that the plan would be very difficult to carry out. Although the two little

goats were not badly carved, yet in order to perform the work right and to earn his bread by it, Toni would have first to learn from a good carver, because making only little animals or boxes would not amount to anything or bring in any money, and he would only be wasting his time.

However, down in the village of Frutigen there was a very skillful, well-known wood-carver, who made wonderful large works which went far into the world, even to America. He carved whole groups of animals on high rocks, chamois and eagles and whole mountains with the herdsman and the cows. Elsbeth could talk with this carver. If Toni studied with him he could help him to sell the finished work, for he had ways open for it.

Elsbeth left the pastor with gratitude and new hope in her heart. In front of the house Toni was waiting in great suspense. She had to tell him at once everything the pastor had said, and when she finally related about the wood-carver in Frutigen Toni suddenly stood still and said:

" Then come, Mother, let us go to the place at once."

However, his mother had not thought it over—she made many objections, but Toni begged so earnestly, that she finally said:

" We must go home first and have something to eat, for it is very far away; but we can do that quickly and then start off again right away."

So they hurried back to the house, took a little bread and milk and started on their way again. They had

several hours to travel, but Toni was so busy with his plans and thoughts for the future, the time flew like a dream and he looked up in great surprise when his mother said:

"See, there is the church tower of Frutigen!"

They were soon standing in front of the wood-carver's house, and learned from the children before the door that their father was at home.

Inside in the large, wainscotted room, sat the wood-carver with his wife at the table, looking at a large book of beautiful colored pictures of animals which he would be able to make good use of in his handicraft. When the two arrived he welcomed them and invited them to come and be seated on the wooden bench, where he and his wife were sitting and which ran along the wall around the entire room. Elsbeth accepted the invitation and immediately began to tell the wood-carver why she had come to see him, and what she so much desired of him.

Meanwhile Toni stood as if rooted to the floor and stared motionless at a single spot. In front of him next the wall was a glass case, in which could be seen two high rocks, carved out of wood. On one was standing a chamois with her little ones. They had such dainty, slender legs, and their fine heads sat so naturally on their necks that it seemed as if they were all alive and not at all made of wood. On the other rock stood a hunter, his gun hanging by his side, and his hat, with even a feather in it, sat on his head, all so finely carved,

that one would think it must be a real hat and a real little feather, and yet all was of wood.

Next the hunter stood his dog, and it seemed as if he would even wag his tail. Toni was like one enchanted and hardly breathed.

When his mother finished speaking, the wood-carver said it seemed to him as if she thought the affair would half go of itself, but it was not so. If a thing was to be done right, it cost much time and patience to learn. He was not averse to taking the boy, for it seemed to him that he had a desire to learn; but she would have to pay for his board for a couple of months in Frutigen, besides paying for his instruction, which would be as much as his board, and she herself must know whether she could spend so much on the boy. On the other hand he would promise that the boy would be taught right, and she could see there in the glass case what he could learn to do.

At first Elsbeth was so disappointed and dismayed she was unable to speak a word. Now she knew that it would be absolutely impossible for her to fulfill her boy's greatest wish. The necessary expense of board and instruction was beyond anything that she could manage, so much so that it was quite out of the question. It was all over with Toni's plans.

She rose and thanked the wood-carver for his willingness to take the boy, but she would have to decline his offer. Then she beckoned to Toni, whose eyes were still so fastened to the glass case that he paid no atten-

tion. She took him by the hand and led him quietly out of the door.

Outside Toni said, drawing a deep breath:

"Did you see what was in the case? Mother, did you see it?"

"Yes, yes, I saw it, Toni," replied his mother with a sigh, "but did you hear what the wood-carver said?"

Toni had heard nothing; all his mind had been directed to one point.

"No, I didn't hear anything; when can I go?" he asked longingly.

"Oh, it is not possible, Toni, but don't take it so to heart! See, I can't do it, although I would like to so much," declared his mother; "but everything would come to more than I earn in a year, and you know how hard I have to work to manage to make the two ends meet."

It was a hard blow for Toni. All his hopes for many years lay destroyed before him; but he knew how his mother worked, how little she herself had, and how she always tried to give him everything that she could. He said not a word and silently swallowed his rising tears, but he was very much grieved that all his hopes were over, since for the first time he had seen what wonderful things could be made out of a piece of wood.

III

UP IN THE MOUNTAINS

THE next morning, the farmer on the Matten farm sent word to Elsbeth to come up to see him towards evening, as he had something to talk with her about. At the right time she laid aside her hoe, tied on a clean apron, and said:

"Finish the hoeing, Toni; then you can milk the goat and give her some fresh straw, so she will have a better bed. Then I will be back again."

She went up to the Matten farm. The farmer was standing in the open barn-door gazing with satisfaction at his beautiful cows, wandering in a long procession to the well. Elsbeth stepped up to him.

"Well, I am glad you have come," he said, holding out his hand to her. "I have been thinking about you on account of the boy's welfare. He is now at an age to do some light work and help you a little, at least to take care of himself."

"I have already been thinking about that," replied Elsbeth, "and wanted to ask you if you could give him a little light work in the fields?"

"That is fortunate," continued the farmer. "I have a little job for him, healthy and not very hard, that is to say not hard at all. He can go up to the small mountain with the cows. The herdsman with his boys is on the big mountain and a man is also there to come every

morning and evening for the milking, so the boy will not be entirely alone and will have nothing to do but watch the cows so that none wander off, that they don't hook each other or do anything out of the way. While he sits there on the mountain he is master and can have all the milk he wants. A king couldn't have anything better."

Elsbeth was a little frightened by the offer. If Toni had been more with the farm men, and had been with cows, or if he had naturally a different disposition, wilder and more roving and commanding—but as he was so quiet and shy, and besides without any knowledge of such things, to be for the first time all alone for several months, away from home, up on the mountains, watching a herd of cows, this seemed to her too hard for Toni. What would the poor boy, who was not particularly strong, do if anything happened to him or to the herd? She expressed all her thoughts to the farmer, but it made no difference; he thought it would be good for the boy to get out for once, and up on the mountain he would be much stronger than at home, and nothing could happen to him, for he would be given a horn and if anything went wrong he could blow lustily, and immediately the farm man would come from the other mountain; in a half hour he would be there.

Elsbeth finally thought the farmer understood it much better than she, and so it was decided that the next week, when the cows went up to the mountain pasture, Toni should go with them.

" He shall have a good bit of money and a new suit of clothes when he comes down. That will be a help for the winter," said the farmer finally.

Elsbeth thanked him as she said good-by, and turned homeward.

Toni was at first opposed to this, when he heard that he would be away so long without being able to come home a single time; but his mother explained to him how easy the work would be, that he would grow stronger up there, so as to be able to do better things later on, and that the Matten farmer would give him a new suit and a good bit of money as pay. So Toni objected no longer, but said he would be glad to do something and not let his mother work alone.

Then it occurred to Elsbeth that, if Toni was going to be away the whole summer, she could perhaps go to one of the big hotels in Interlaken where so many strangers go for the summer. There she could earn a good sum of money and meet the coming winter without anxiety. She was already known in Interlaken for she had served as chambermaid in one of the hotels for several summers before her marriage.

When the day came for the big herd of cows to be taken up to the mountain pasture, Toni's mother gave him his little bundle and said:

" Go now, in God's name! Don't forget to pray, when the day begins, and when it ends, and the dear Lord will not forget you, and His protection is better than that of men."

So Toni started off with his little bundle behind the herd up the mountain.

Immediately after this Elsbeth closed her cottage. She took the goat up to the Matten farm. When the farmer heard that she was going to Interlaken, he promised her to take the goat, and thought when Elsbeth came home again, she would give twice as much milk, and what he made from her he would give back to Elsbeth in cheese. Then she started down to Interlaken.

The herd had already been climbing the mountain for several hours. The herdsman turned off to the left with the big herd, and the man went with Toni up towards the right, followed by the smaller herd, which consisted of fewer cows but many young cattle, for not many cows could be kept on the small mountain pasture, because the milk had to be carried across to the big one where the herdsman's hut stood.

They now reached the highest point of the pasture. There stood a little hut. All around there was nothing but pasture, not a tree, not a bush. In the hut on one side was a narrow seat fastened to the wall in front of which stood a table. On the other side stood a bed of hay. In the corner was a little, round stool and on this was a wooden jug.

Toni and the man stepped inside. The latter placed on the floor the big wooden milk-pail, which he had brought up on his back, took out of it a round loaf of bread and a huge piece of cheese, laid both on the table

and said: " Of course you have a knife," to which Toni assented.

Then the man took the wooden jug, swung the milk-pail on his back and went out. Toni followed him. The man lifted a wooden basin out of the big pail, seated himself on the little round stool which he had brought out of the hut and began to milk one cow after another. If one was too far away, he would call out: " Drive her here! " and Toni obeyed. When the basin was full he poured it into the big pail and silently went on until all the cows had been milked. At the last the man filled the jug with milk, handed it to Toni, took the pail on his back, the basin in his hand and saying " Good-night! " went down the mountain.

Then Toni was all alone. He put his jug of milk in the hut and came out again. He looked around on every side. He looked over to the big mountain, but between that and his pasture was a wide valley so one had to descend in order to climb up to the big one. But all around both pastures great dark masses of mountains looked down, some rocky, gray and jagged, others covered with snow, all reaching up to the sky, so high and mighty and with such different peaks and horns and some with such broad backs, that it almost seemed to Toni as if they were enormous giants, each one having his own face and looking down at him. It was a clear evening. The mountain opposite was shining in the golden evening light, and now a little star came into sight above the dark mountains, and looked down to

Toni in such a friendly way that it cheered him very much.

He thought of his mother, where she was now and how she was in the habit of standing with him at this time in front of the little cottage and talking so pleasantly. Then suddenly there came over him such a feeling of loneliness that he ran into the hut, threw himself down on the cot, buried his face in the hay and sobbed softly, until the weariness of the day overcame him and he fell asleep.

The bright morning lured him out early. The man was already outside. He milked the cows, spoke not a word and went away.

Now a long, long day followed. It was perfectly still all around. The cows grazed and lay down around in the sun-bathed pasture. Toni went into the hut two or three times, drank some milk and ate some bread and cheese. Then he came out again, sat down on the ground and carved on a piece of wood he had in his pocket, for although he no longer dared to cherish the hope of becoming a wood-carver, yet he could not help carving for himself as well as he could. At last it was evening again. The man came and went. He said not a word, and Toni had nothing to say either.

Thus passed one day after another. They were all so long! so long! In the evening, when it began to grow dark it always seemed terrible to Toni, for then the high mountains looked so black and threatening, as if they would suddenly do him some harm. Then he

would rush back into the hut and crawl into his bed of hay.

Many days had passed like this, one exactly the same as the other. The sun had always shone in a cloudless sky; always at evening the friendly little star had gleamed above the dark mountain. But one afternoon, thick, gray clouds began to chase one another across the sky; now and then blinding lightning flashed, and suddenly frightful thunder-bolts sounded, which echoed roaring from the mountains, as if there were twice as many and then a terrible storm broke. It was as dark as night; the rain beat against the hut, and meanwhile the thunder rolled with fearful reverberations through the mountains; quivering lightning lighted up the black, frightful giant-forms, which seemed quite specter-like to come nearer and look down menacingly. The cattle ran together in alarm and bellowed loudly, and great birds of prey flapped around with piercing shrieks.

Toni had long since fled into the hut, but the lightning showed him the frightful forms and it seemed every minute as if the rolling thunder would overthrow the hut to the ground. Toni was so alarmed he could hardly breathe. He climbed up on the table expecting every minute that the hut would fall and crush him. The storm lasted for hours, and the man never came over. It was now really night but still the blinding lightning flashed and new peals of thunder rolled and the storm howled and raged as if it would sweep the hut away.

Toni stood half the night stiff with fright, clinging to

the table, and with no thought, only a feeling of a frightful power, which was crushing everything. How he reached his bed he did not know, but in the morning he lay stretched across the hay, so exhausted he could hardly rise. He looked anxiously out of the window. How must it look outside after such a night? Then he went out to see about the cows. The ground was still wet, but the animals were peacefully grazing.

The sky was gray, and thick, black clouds were passing over it. Gloomy and frightful the high mountains stood there. They had come so near and looked more threateningly than ever at Toni. He ran back into the hut.

Many days of thunder-storms followed, one after another and if the sun came out between, it burned unbearably, and new storms followed so unceasingly and violent, that the herdsman on the other mountain often said that he had not known such a summer for years, and if it didn't change he wouldn't make half so much butter as in former summers, because the cows gave no milk, as they didn't like the fodder.

During this time the man-servant chose the most favorable time to come over to the small pasture, milked the cows as quickly as possible and did not look after the boy at all; only now and then, when he thought Toni had no more milk, he would bring the jug out quickly, fill it and put it back again. Then he often saw Toni sitting on his bed of hay, and would call out in passing:

"You are lazy!"

But then he ran right away in order to get back without being wet, and did not trouble himself further about the boy.

So June had passed, and already a good part of July. The thunder-storms had become less frequent, but thick fog often so enveloped the mountain that one could hardly see two steps away, and only here and there a black head appeared, looking gloomily through the mist. The cattle often wandered so far that the man found some of them between the two mountains and brought them up again. This would not do. He called up to the boy, but received no answer. He ran to the hut and went in. Toni, crouched in the corner, was sitting on his bed and staring straight before him.

"Why don't you look after the cows?" asked the man.

He received no answer.

"Can't you speak? What is the matter with you?"

No answer.

Then the man looked at the bread and cheese, to see if Toni had eaten everything and was suffering from hunger. But more than half the bread was there and the larger part of the cheese. Toni had taken almost nothing but milk.

"What is the matter with you, then? Are you sick?" asked the man again.

Toni gave no answer. He seemed not to hear anything and stared so motionless before him that the man was quite alarmed. He ran out of the hut. He told the herdsman how it was with the boy and they decided

that when one of the herdsman's boys went down with the butter, he must tell the Matten farmer about it.

Another week passed. Then the news was brought to the farmer. He thought the boy would be happy again, that the heavy thunder-storms had only frightened him a little. But he sent word for the herdsman to go over; he had boys of his own and would understand better about this than the hired man. If anything was wrong with Toni he must be brought down.

Some days later the herdsman really went over with one of his boys and found Toni still crouched in the corner just as the man had seen him. Toni made no sound to anything the herdsman said to him, did not move and kept staring always before him.

"He must go down," said the herdsman to his boy; "go with him right away, but take care that nothing happens to him and be good to him; the boy is to be pitied," and he looked at Toni with sympathy, for the herdsman had a good heart and took delight in his own three big, healthy boys. The one he had with him was a strong, sturdy fellow of sixteen years. He went up to Toni and told him to stand up, but Toni did not move. Then the lad took him under the arms, lifted him up, like a feather, then swung him on his back, held him firmly with both hands, and went with his light burden down the mountain.

When the Matten farmer saw Toni in such a sad condition, which remained just the same, he was alarmed, for he had not expected such a thing. He did not know

at all what to do with the boy. His mother was far away, no relatives were there, and he himself did not want to keep Toni while in this condition. He could take such a responsibility, but he did not want to do so. Suddenly a good thought came to him, the same as the people there in every difficulty, in every need and every trouble, always have first of all:

" Take him to the Pastor," he said to the herdsman's boy; " he will have some good advice to give, which will help."

The lad immediately started off and went to the Pastor, who allowed the boy to tell him as much as he knew about the details of the case, how Toni came to be in this condition and how long it had lasted; but the lad knew very little about it all. The Pastor first tried every means to make Toni speak, and asked him if he would like to go to his mother, but it was all in vain; Toni did not give the least sign of understanding or interest.

Then the Pastor sat down, wrote a letter and said to the herdsman's boy:

" Go back to the Matten farm and tell the farmer to harness his little carriage and send it to me, and then I will see that Toni goes to-day to Bern. He is very sick; say that to the farmer."

The farmer harnessed immediately, glad that further responsibility was taken from him and he had only to carry Toni as far as the railway. But the Pastor sent down to his sexton, an older, kindly man, who had given

him a helping hand for years in many matters of responsibility. He was commissioned to take Toni with all care to the great sanitarium in Bern and to give the letter to the doctor there, a good friend of the Pastor's. A half hour later, the open carriage with the high seat drove up in front of the Pastor's house. The sexton climbed up, placed the sick boy beside him, held him carefully but firmly, and thus Toni drove out into the world, with a horse, for the first time in his life. But he sat there with no sign of interest. It was as if he were no longer conscious of the outer world.

IV

IN THE SANITARIUM

The doctor of the sanitarium was sitting with his family around the family table, engaged in merry conversation on various subjects. Even the lady from Geneva, who spent several hours a day with the family, seemed to-day a little infected by the children's gayety. She had never before taken so lively a part in the discussion, which the school-children carried on about different interests.

This lady's beloved and gifted son had died not long before; on this account she had fallen into such deep sadness that her health had suffered greatly and therefore she had been brought to the sanitarium to recover.

The animated conversation was suddenly interrupted by a letter which was handed to the doctor.

"A letter from an old friend, who is sending me a patient to the sanitarium. He is a young boy, hardly as old as our Max—there, read it." Whereupon the doctor handed the letter to his wife.

"Oh, the poor boy!" exclaimed his wife. "Is he here? Bring him in. Perhaps it will do him good to see the children."

"I think he is outside," said the doctor; he went out, and soon came in again with the sexton and Toni. He led the former into a bay window and began talking with him in a low tone. Meanwhile the doctor's wife drew near to Toni, who on entering had pressed into the nearest corner. She spoke kindly to him and invited him to come to the table and eat something with her children. Toni did not move. Then lively little Marie jumped down from her chair and came to Toni with a large piece of bread and butter.

"There, take a bite," she said encouragingly.

Toni remained motionless.

"See, you must do so," and the little girl bit a good piece from the bread and held it to him, then again a little nearer, so he only needed to bite into it. But he stared in front of him and made no motion. This silent resistance frightened Marie and she drew back quietly.

Then the doctor came, took Toni by the hand and went out, followed by the sexton.

Poor Toni's appearance had made a great impression on the children. They had become perfectly quiet.

Later when they had gone to bed and the two women were sitting alone together, the doctor came back again. In reply to their urgent questions he informed them about all that the sexton had told him concerning Toni's illness and his life with his mother, and that no one had ever noticed anything wrong with the boy before, only he had always been a quiet, gentle child and more slenderly built than any of the other village children.

The women asked how he had come into this condition in the summer up on the beautiful mountain, and the doctor explained that it was not so strange, if one knew how terrible the thunder-storms were up in the mountains. "Besides," he concluded, "a delicate child, such as this boy, all alone without a human being near, for whole weeks, even months long, without hearing a word spoken, might well be so terrified through fear and horror in the awful loneliness that he would become wholly benumbed."

Then the lady from Geneva, who took an unusual interest in poor Toni's fate, exclaimed in great excitement:

"How can a mother allow such a thing to happen to her child! It is wholly inconceivable, quite incomprehensible!"

"You really can have no idea," replied the doctor soothingly, "what poor mothers are obliged to let

happen to their children. But don't believe that it causes them less pain than others. You see how many suffer that we know nothing about, and how hard poverty oppresses."

"Will you be able to help the poor young boy?" asked the lady from Geneva.

"If I can only bring out the right emotion in him," he replied, "so that the spell, which holds him imprisoned, can be broken. Now everything in him is numbed and lifeless."

"Oh, do help him! Do help him!" begged the sick lady imploringly. "Oh, if I could do something for him!" And she walked to and fro thinking about a way to help, for Toni's condition went deeply to her heart.

It was the second week of August when Toni came to the sanitarium. Day after day, week after week passed and the doctor could only bring the same sad news to the two women, who every morning awaited his report with great anxiety. Not the slightest change was noticed. Every means was tried to amuse the boy, to see if he would perhaps laugh. Other attempts were devised to disturb him, to make him cry. They performed all kinds of tricks to attract his attention. All, all were in vain; no trace of interest or emotion was aroused in Toni.

"If he could only be made to laugh or to cry once!" repeated the doctor over and over again.

When he had been four weeks in the sanitarium all

hope disappeared, for the doctor had exhausted every means.

"Now I will try one thing more," he said one morning to his wife. "I have written to my friend, the Pastor, and asked him if the boy was very much attached to his mother, and if so, to send for her right away. Perhaps to see her again would make an impression on him."

The two women looked forward in great suspense to Elsbeth's arrival.

In the first week of September the last guests left the hotel in Interlaken where Elsbeth had spent the summer. She immediately started on her way home, for she wanted to get everything in order before Toni came down from the mountain. She never thought but that he was still up there, and had no suspicion of all that had happened. When she reached home, she went at once to the Matten farm to enquire for Toni and to bring the goat home.

The farmer was very friendly, and thought her goat was now by far one of the finest, because she had had good fodder so long. But when Elsbeth asked after her Toni, he broke off abruptly and said he had so much to do, she must go to the Pastor, for he would have the best knowledge about the boy. It immediately seemed to Elsbeth that it was a little strange for the Pastor to know best what happened up on the mountain and while she was leading home the goat, and thinking about the matter, a feeling of anxiety came over her and grew

stronger and stronger. As soon as she reached home, she quickly tied the goat, without going into the cottage at all, and ran back the same way she had come, down again to Kandergrund.

The Pastor told her with great consideration, how Toni had not borne the life on the mountain very well and they had been obliged to bring him down, and since it seemed best for him that he should go at once to a good physician for the right care, he had sent the boy immediately to Bern.

His mother was very much shocked and wanted to travel the next day to see for herself if her child was very ill.

But the Pastor said that would not do, but that she should wait until the doctor allowed a visit, and she could be sure that Toni was receiving the best care.

With a heavy heart Elsbeth went back to her cottage. She could do nothing but leave it all to the dear Lord, who alone had been her trust for so many years. But it was only a few days later when the Pastor sent her word that she was to go to Bern at once, as the doctor wished her to come.

Early the following day Elsbeth started. About noon she reached Bern and soon was standing in front of the door of the sanitarium.

She was led to the doctor's living-room and here received with great friendliness by his wife and with still keener sympathy by the lady from Geneva, who had so lived in the history of poor Toni and his mother that

she could hardly think of anything else but how to help these two. She had had only the one child and could so well understand the mother's trouble. She had even asked the doctor to allow her to be present when he took the boy to his mother, in order to share in the joy, if the poor boy's delight at seeing her again would affect him as they hoped.

Soon the doctor appeared, and after he had prepared the mother not to expect Toni to speak at the first moment, he brought him in. He led him by the hand into the room, then he let go and stepped to one side.

The mother ran to her Toni and tried to seize his hand. He drew back and pressed into the corner staring into vacancy.

The women and the doctor exchanged sad looks.

His mother went up to him and caressed him.

"Toneli, Toneli," she said again and again in a tender voice, "don't you know me? Don't you know your mother any more?"

As always before Toni pressed against the wall, made no motion and stared before him.

In tender tones the mother continued mournfully:

"Oh, Toneli, say just a single word! Only look at me once! Toneli, don't you hear me?"

Toneli remained unmoved.

Still once again the mother looked at him full of tenderness, but only met his staring eyes. It was too much for poor Elsbeth, that the only possession she had on earth, and the one she loved with all her heart, her

Toni, should be lost to her, and in such a sad way! She forgot everything around her. She fell on her knees beside her child, and while the tears were bursting from her eyes, she poured out aloud the sorrow in her heart:

Oh God of Love, oh Father-heart,
In whom my trust is founded,
I know full well how good Thou art—
E'en when by grief I am wounded.

Oh Lord, it surely can not be
That Thou wilt let me languish
In hopeless depths of misery
And live in tears of anguish.

Toni's eyes took on a different expression. He looked at his mother. She did not see him and went on imploring in the midst of her tears:

Oh Lord, my soul yearns for Thine aid
In this dark vale of weeping;
For Thee I have waited, hoped and prayed,
Assured of Thy safe keeping.

Suddenly Toni threw himself on his mother and sobbed aloud. She threw her arms around him and her tears of sorrow turned to loud sobs of joy. The child sobbed aloud also.

"It is won," said the doctor in great delight to the women, who, deeply moved, were looking on at the mother and boy.

Then the doctor opened the door of the next room and beckoned Elsbeth to go in there with Toni. He

thought it would be good for both to be alone for a while. In there after a while Toni began to talk quite naturally with his mother and asked her:

"Are we going home, Mother, to the stone hut? Sha'n't I have to go up on the mountain any more?"

And she quieted him and said she would now take him right home, and they would stay there together. Soon all Toni's thoughts came back again quite clearly, and after a while he said:

"But I must earn something, Mother."

"Don't trouble about that now," said Elsbeth quietly; "the dear Lord will show a way when it is time."

Then they began to talk about the goat, how pretty and fat she had grown, and Toni gradually became quite lively.

After an hour the doctor brought them both into the living-room back to the ladies. Toni was entirely changed; his eyes had now an earnest but quite different expression. The lady from Geneva was indescribably delighted. She sat down beside him at once, and he had to tell her where he had been to school and what he had liked to study.

But the doctor beckoned to Elsbeth to come to him.

"Listen, my good woman," he began, "the words which you repeated made a deep, penetrating impression on the boy's heart. Did he know the hymn already?"

"Oh, yes, sir," exclaimed Elsbeth, "many hundred times I have repeated it beside his little bed, when he

was very small, often with many tears, and he would weep too, when he didn't know why."

"He wept because you wept, he suffered because you suffered," said the doctor. "Now I understand how he was aroused by these words. With such impressions in early childhood it is no wonder he became a quiet and reserved boy. This explains to me a great deal in the past."

Then the lady from Geneva came up for she wanted to talk with the mother.

"My dear, good woman, he certainly must not go up on the mountain again. He is not fit for it," she said in great eagerness. "We must find something different for him. Has he no taste for some other occupation? But it must be light, for he is not strong and needs care."

"Oh, yes, he has a great desire to learn something," said his mother. "From a little boy he has wished for it, but I hardly dare mention it."

"There, there, my good woman, tell me right away about it," said the lady encouragingly, expecting something unheard-of.

"He wants so much to be a wood-carver, and has a good deal of talent for it, but the cost of board and instruction together is more than eighty francs."

"Is that all?" exclaimed the lady in the greatest surprise, "is that all? Come, my boy," and she ran to Toni again, "would you really like to become a wood-carver—better than anything else?"

The joy which shone in Toni's eyes, when he answered that he would, showed the lady what she had to do. She had such a longing to help Toni, that she wanted to act immediately that very hour.

"Would you like to learn at once, go to a teacher right away?" she asked him.

Toni gladly replied that he would.

But now came a new thought. She turned to the doctor. "Perhaps he ought to recover his health first?"

The doctor replied that he had been already thinking about that. The mother had told him that she knew a very good master up in Frutigen. "Now I think," he went on to say, "that carving is not a strenuous work, and one of the most important things for Toni is to have for some time good, nourishing food. In Frutigen there is a very good inn, if he only could ——"

"I will undertake that, Doctor, I will undertake that," interrupted the lady. "I will go with him. We will start to-morrow. In Frutigen I will provide for Toni's board and lodging and for everything he needs." In her great delight the lady shook hands with both the mother and the boy repeatedly, and went out to instruct her maid about preparations for the journey.

When the mother with her boy had been taken to their room, the doctor said with great delight to his wife:

"We have two recoveries. Our lady is also cured. A new interest has come to her, and you will see she will have new life in providing for this young boy. This has been a beautiful day!"

On the following morning the journey was made to Frutigen, and the little company were so glad and happy together that they reached there before they were aware of it.

At the wood-carver's the lady was told everything that would be needed for the work, and after he had showed them all kinds of instruments, he thought a fine book with good pictures, from which one could work, would be useful.

After the lady had charged him to teach Toni everything in any way necessary for the future, they went to the inn. Here the lady engaged a good room with comfortable bed, and herself arranged with the host a bill of fare for every day in the week. The host promised, with many bows, to follow everything exactly, for he saw very well with whom he had to deal.

Then Toni and his mother had to eat with the lady in the inn, and during the meal she had much more to say. She was going now, she said, the next day, home to Geneva, where there were large shops, in which nothing was sold but carvings. There she would immediately arrange for Toni to send all his articles, so he could begin to work with fresh zeal. Moreover, she insisted that Toni should remain, not two, but three months with the carver, so that he could learn everything from the foundation. He could go from here to visit his mother on Sundays, or she could come to him.

Elsbeth and Toni were so full of gratitude, they could find no words to express it, but the lady understood

them nevertheless and bore home a happy heart, such as she had not had for a long time.

It came about just as the doctor had foreseen. The lady, who had not been able to think any more about her home, now desired to return to Geneva. She had so many plans to carry out there that she could hardly wait for the day when she was to go back.

The doctor was delighted to consent to her going soon.

Toni, who had hardly begun with his new teacher, applied himself with so much zeal and skill to his work, that the carver said to his wife in the fourth week:

"If he goes on like this, he will learn to do better than I can."

The three months had come to an end, and Christmas was drawing near. One morning Toni waded through the deep snow up to his home. He looked round and fresh, and his heart was so happy he had to sing aloud as he came along.

But when after a long walk, he suddenly saw the stone hut with the fir-tree thickly covered with snow behind it, tears of joy came to his eyes. He was coming home, home for all time. He ran to the little house, and his mother, who had already seen him, hurried out, and which one of the two was the more delighted, no one could tell; but they were both so happy, as they sat together again in the cottage, that they could think of no greater fortune on earth. Their highest wish was fulfilled. Toni was a wood-carver, and could carry on his work at home with his mother. And with what bless-

ings besides the dear Lord was still overwhelming them! From Geneva such good things kept coming to Elsbeth, that she no longer had to dread anxious days, and with each package came new assurance of the ready acceptance of Toni's work.

Such a Christmas festival as was celebrated two days later in the stone hut, neither Elsbeth nor Toni had ever known before, for the candles which his mother had lighted shone out upon a quantity of things, which Toni had received to wear, and also a whole set of the most beautiful knives for carving and a book with pictures, of a size and beauty such as Toni had never in all his life seen before. His master's book was a mere child's toy beside it. Elsbeth too was lovingly provided for. The lady from Geneva had planned everything, and the bright reflection from it fell back radiantly into her own heart.

The most beautiful deer and huntsman and the wonderful eagles on the rock, standing in the high show-window in Geneva was carved by Toni, and was considered by him to be a particularly successful piece, so it went, not to the dealer in Geneva, but to the lady for whom Toni preserved a thankful heart all his life long.

Little Curly-Head

I

AT WILLOW-JOSEPH'S HOUSE

WHERE lovely, green willow-clad hills rise, one after another, and the intersecting valleys are covered with gleaming red and blue Summer flowers, there lies the little village of Altkirch. The neat, white church with the red tower, and the wooden houses round about, lie protected from every wind, in the green vale, for at the back of the village and from both sides rise steep hills, and only the front side is free and open. This looks across towards the green height of Rechberg, on the wood-crowned summit of which another village with its white stone houses shines afar, and like the mountain bears the name of Rechberg.

Between the hills the wild Ziller brook rushes along, bringing on its journey down from the mountains much wood and stone in its troubled waters.

A highway leads from Altkirch to Rechberg, but it makes a long journey. First it zigzags down the mountain to the Ziller brook, then over the old covered bridge, and on the other side it again zigzags up to the village of Rechberg, in all good five miles long. A shorter and

much pleasanter way is by the narrow foot-path, which leads straight over the mountain down to the brook, and straight across the narrow wooden bridge which spans the rushing torrent. The bridge is so narrow only one person at a time can go over it, and it is well that there is a railing on both sides, by which one can hold on firmly, for it is so lightly built it trembles and yields so much with every step, that the traveler feels quite unsafe as he crosses it.

Not a house is to be seen in any direction on all the green hills around, except on the last, where the steep footpath goes down to the brook. There stands a lonely chapel, looking down upon the rushing water from ancient times, and the bridge so often carried away and newly built again.

There are many poor people in Altkirch, for there is very little work there. Most of the men go as day-laborers to the farms in the neighborhood; a few own a bit of land which they cultivate. Only two or three peasants in the village have enough land to keep a few cows.

One of the poorest families was that of Willow-Joseph, in the old tumble-down cottage, standing opposite the chapel on the foot-path and quite alone. The cottage is almost covered with the long overhanging branches of an ancient willow-tree, which had spread out more and more until it had at last wholly surrounded it. From this tree the owner was called Willow-Joseph. He had always lived in the cottage, for it had belonged

to his father, who had lived there a long time before. Now Willow-Joseph was himself an old man, and lived in the cottage with his aged wife, who had been ill for a good while, and his two grandchildren.

Willow-Joseph had an only son, Sepp, who had always been a good-natured, but a rather shiftless and an unsteady man.

Where he was living now the old parents did not know, for he had gone away from home six years before and little had been heard from him during that time. Sepp had married very early in life, and his parents had been glad, for his wife was the good industrious Constance, whom everybody liked. She was also good-looking and as she went quietly on her way, working conscientiously, she was equalled by few. She kept everything in beautiful order about her husband's house, and Willow-Joseph and his wife had good times as long as their daughter was with them. She worked from early until late and did not let the parents lack for anything. She said father and mother must now rest, as they had done enough, and they two young people must give the old ones happy days.

Sepp went to work every day on the big farm the other side of the brook and on Saturday brought home a good sum of money. Everything was so well ordered and went on its lovely course in health and happiness that Sepp became a very steady man and had no desire to depart from it.

Three years passed thus in undisturbed happiness,

and old Father Klemens, who lived in the long old house back of Altkirch and often came to Willow-Joseph's cottage, said many times:

"Joseph, it is good to live at your house. No unkind words are heard there. Honor your Constance!"

And his kind eyes lighted up with joy when Constance, neat and trim as she always was, came in and welcomed him with her merry voice, and little Stanzeli in her arms would hold out her tiny hand while he was still some distance away, to Father Klemens. Then he would say again:

"Yes, surely, it is good to live with you, Joseph!"

When Stanzeli was two years old little Seppli came into the world. This was a great joy for all, but soon after the greatest sorrow that could happen came to Willow-Joseph's house. Constance died and left her husband and little children, causing a gap that never more was filled.

From that time on Sepp ran about aimlessly. A restless and unsteady spirit came over him again; he could no longer stay at home on Sunday, as he formerly was so glad to do; it drove him farther and farther away, and at last he decided if he could go away altogether and find other work, far off, it would be better for him. He promised to send his parents from time to time a good sum of money to provide for them and his children; then he went away.

For some time he kept his promise and sent the contribution. Then it ceased and for six years they had

known nothing more about him, neither where he had gone, nor even if he was still alive.

Meanwhile both parents had kept growing weaker and poorer. The only small earnings left to them were derived from little baskets which the grandfather wove from the willow twigs and gave every Friday to the dairyman, who carried his cheese to market in the town. The grandfather did not make much from his baskets and the grandmother had to portion out every slice of bread, to get along from one day to another.

Stanzeli was now almost nine, and Seppli seven years old, and Stanzeli had to help her grandfather in everything he did, for her grandmother had been sick in bed for four months, and could do nothing more. So the grandfather and Stanzeli had to do the cooking together every day, but this was not very extensive for there was nothing cooked but corn-meal mush and potatoes, and very rarely a little coffee. But it needed both of them to prepare the food, for Stanzeli was too small still to lift the pots and the grandfather did not always know how to mix things for cooking, while Stanzeli knew this quite well.

So they always worked together in the kitchen, and Seppli usually stood also in the little room where the two could hardly move without getting in each other's way, and gazed in wide-eyed expectation at the grand things which were prepared there. And neither the grandfather nor Stanzeli tried to keep Seppli out of the little kitchen, for they knew very well that he would be

back again in two minutes, for Seppli had remarkable persistence in many ways.

A beautiful, warm September sun was shining outside over the green hills around Altkirch. Even a few beams fell through the opaque window panes on the grandmother's bed.

" O God! " she sighed, " is the sun still shining? If I could only go out once more! But I would be still if my bed was not as hard as wood and nothing more in my pillow. And when I begin to think of the Winter, if I must lie here so on the hard sack, under the thin little cover and without a good pillow, I shall die of cold. I am cold already."

" You mustn't worry about the Winter yet," said the grandfather soothingly. " Our Lord will still be alive then; He has helped us many times, when things looked bad, you must not forget that. What do you say if we make a little drop of coffee to warm you up? "

The grandmother was glad to drink a little cup of coffee, and the grandfather opened the door into the kitchen, for you went directly into it from the room where the grandmother's bed stood. A little flight of stairs behind the stove led up to the sleeping room, where the grandfather slept with the children. Then he beckoned to Stanzeli to come, and immediately Seppli followed after, for he had to see what was going to be prepared to eat. Outside the grandfather took down the saucepan from its place and poured water into it. Then he said:

"Stanzeli, what do you do first?"

"First I must grind the coffee-beans," explained the child and immediately sat down with the old coffee-mill on the stool and turned it with all her might. But there was something wrong with it, and she examined it in first one way and then another, and finally drew out the little drawer carefully underneath. Instead of the fine powder she ought to have found in it, were big pieces almost half coffee-beans. Stanzeli, in horror, held out the drawer to her grandfather, and showed him the trouble. Her grandfather looked at the damage and tried to keep her quiet, saying:

"You mustn't make any noise for your grandmother to hear, or she will be troubled and think she can't have any more coffee to drink. Just wait a little."

Whereupon the grandfather went out and soon came back with a big stone in his hand. With this he broke and crushed the coffee-beans on a paper, and then Stanzeli shook the coarse powder into the saucepan. But when the grandmother took her cup in her hand, she exclaimed pitifully:

"Oh dear! oh dear! big grains are floating on the top, the coffee-mill is broken. Oh, if she had only brought it to me. We are not able to buy a new one."

But the grandfather said in a soothing tone:

"You mustn't make yourself sick about it. With patience many things are made right."

"Yes, indeed, but no coffee-mill," complained the grandmother again.

Stanzeli and Seppli each had a little cup of coffee, and some pieces of potato, for they had bread only on Sunday, each a small piece.

Then the grandfather brought out his baskets, which he had finished weaving, tied them together in pairs with a string and placed a little bundle of them in each child's hands. Then he told the children to go along with them, and charged them not to be too late in coming home. They knew where they had to go with the baskets, for every two weeks they went to the dairyman's on such an errand. He lived quite far from the village. They had to go over the hill, past the chapel, up to the woods, where his cottage stood.

The children now started and since Stanzeli always went on her way conscientiously, Seppli had to follow, even when he would like to stop and look at one thing or another. When they came to the chapel, Stanzeli stood still and said:

" Lay the baskets here on the ground, Seppli; we must go into the chapel and say the Lord's Prayer. They can lie here until we come out."

But Seppli was obstinate.

" I will not go in, I am too hot," he said and sat down on the ground.

" No, Seppli, come. You must come in," commanded Stanzeli. " Don't you know that Father Klemens said when you went by a chapel you must always go in and say a prayer? Stand up and come quickly! "

Seppli remained obstinately sitting on the ground.

But Stanzeli gave him no rest. She took him quite anxiously by the hand and pulled him up.

"You must come, Seppli. It is not right to do so. You ought to want to pray."

At that moment some one came up from below to the chapel. Suddenly Father Klemens stood before the children.

Seppli sprang to his feet in a twinkling. The children offered their hands to the Father.

"Seppli! Seppli!" he said very kindly, as he pressed his hand, "what did I hear? You will not follow Stanzeli, when she wants to go into the chapel with you? I will tell you something. You see, it is not a command of our Lord's that we should go into the chapel to pray, but it is a privilege that we may pray to Him so. And every time when we do this, He sends us something, which we cannot always see right away."

Then the kind priest continued on his way and Seppli went without further opposition with Stanzeli into the chapel and said his prayer reverently. After some time when the children had come out again, they heard loud voices and a heavy panting sounded up the foot-path, which descends very steep to the brook.

Then one after another three heads came into sight, first a little girl's head, and then two boys' heads, and then all at once three children stood before the other two and they all looked at one another with mutual astonishment.

II

NEW ACQUAINTANCES

The little girl who had just appeared was the largest of them all. She must have been quite eleven years old and the larger of the brothers a little over a year younger, while the other was considerably smaller, but very stockily built.

The little girl came a few steps nearer the children and said:

"What are your names?"

The children mentioned them.

"Where is your home?" asked the child further.

"In Altkirch, there. You can see the church tower," replied Stanzeli, pointing to the red tower between the hills.

"So you have a church too! We have a church like that, but it is closed and we only go in on Sunday. But we have no chapel like that. There stands one higher up. Just see, Kurt, away up in the woods."

The little girl pointed up with her finger and her brother nodded to show that he saw what she wished him to.

"I should like to know why you have such chapels here on so many of the hills."

"So that you can go in and pray, when you pass by," said Stanzeli quickly.

"You can do that anyway," replied the other little

girl; " you can pray anywhere, wherever you are, for the dear Lord hears us everywhere, that I know."

" Yes, but you don't think you ought to pray, until you come to the chapel, then you know right away, and do it too," replied Stanzeli earnestly.

" Now we must go, Lissa," urged her brother Kurt, for this conversation was too long for him.

But Lissa did not hurry at all; she enjoyed making this acquaintance, and Stanzeli pleased her because she made such decided answers and had just said what Lissa could not deny, for she knew it herself. It was really so: it never came into her mind to pray and thank the dear Lord when she went out for a walk and was happy, although she had just said decidedly to Stanzeli that you could pray everywhere. All at once the chapel made a new impression on Lissa, for until now she had looked upon it as only a building, standing there merely because it had been placed there a long time before. She had never thought that to-day it was still making a definite call to every one who passed by. Now it was as if the dear Lord pointed down from Heaven to the chapel and said:

" There it stands, so that you may think of Me."

As Lissa, absorbed in thought, did not speak for a long time, Stanzeli continued:

" And it is not like a command, but rather a favor that we may go in and pray, for when we do so, the dear Lord always sends us something, although we cannot see it. Father Klemens said so."

"Yes, but I would rather have something I can see," broke in Seppli, who had remained standing by Stanzeli and had listened attentively.

"Do you know Father Klemens too?" asked Lissa, quite delighted, for he was well known to all the children on the other side of the Ziller brook for a long distance, and their good friend. Wherever he was seen by them, in his long cloak, the big crucifix hanging at his side, they would run to him from every direction to shake hands with him, and he would immediately take out his old pocketbook from his full robe and give a lovely, bright-colored picture to each one. Lissa had already received many of them, with rosy angels, scattering flowers, and others with a bush full of blooming roses, and a little bird sitting on the very top, and many others besides, so the name of Father Klemens called up the dearest memories.

"He lives near us in Altkirch, up in the old monastery, and he often comes to see us," Stanzeli informed them.

"Yes, and he often brings grandmother a whole loaf of bread," added Seppli, in whose memory this fact stood out very clearly.

"Now we must go; it is still a long way to the dairyman's," said Stanzeli, as she took up her bundle of baskets, and gave Seppli his.

"Will you come to see me sometime, in Rechberg?" asked Lissa, who wanted to continue the new acquaintance a little further.

"I don't know the way. I have never been on the other side of the brook."

"Oh, that is very easy to find, only come early some Sunday afternoon," said Lissa encouragingly. "Then we can play until evening. You have only to go along the path below, and up and up, to the very highest point, and there is Rechberg, and the big house, that stands all alone above all the rest, is our house. So come then!"

Then the children parted. Stanzeli went with Seppli up the mountain and Lissa looked around for her brothers for she had heard nothing of them for a long while. Kurt had climbed up into the old fir-tree, standing next the chapel, and was swinging boldly back and forth on a rotten limb, which cracked suspiciously so that Lissa watched with interest to see whether Kurt would soon come down with the branch, which seemed more amusing than dangerous.

Not far from the tree lay little fat Karl stretched out on the ground fast asleep, and so fast asleep that Lissa's loud calls to get up were entirely lost on him. But now there came something tumbling down the hill that suddenly brought Kurt from the tree and Karl to his feet. It was a big flock of sheep, old and young, big and small: all were swarming, hopping, jumping together and beside them the big sheep dog ran barking so loud and emphatically to prevent any from being lost, that Karl was immediately wakened and sprang up quickly to look at the passing crowd.

The shepherd drove his flock past the children towards Altkirch. The three looked in silent amazement at them as they went by and their eyes could not take in enough of the merry gambols, which the pretty young lambs made beside their mothers, who looked carefully after the little ones, lest they should run away mischievously from the others and be lost.

When the flock had almost passed out of sight, and only the old sheep were left running after the others, Karl, still lost in astonishment, drew a long breath and said:

"If we only had a little lamb like them!"

That was exactly what Kurt and Lissa thought, and all three were wholly agreed, which was seldom the case. Lissa at once proposed to return home quickly and to beg their papa and mamma to grant their request and give them a lamb. Then she pictured to her brothers how it would be if they could take the lamb everywhere with them and lead it up to the pasture and always see its merry gambols and watch it carefully as the old sheep did; and all three with the prospect of such a possession became so delighted, that they rushed down the mountain with all their might and ran over the bridge, Lissa going first. Behind her followed Kurt, and both bounded so high over the lightly built bridge that it tottered and trembled under their feet, and the loose boards laid on it sprang up and down, so that Karl following after lost his footing and fell in the middle of the bridge, and almost plunged into the rush-

ing brook. Kurt turned around and pulled him up, and since Lissa had already come to solid ground, the bridge no longer swayed up and down and the brothers came safely to the other side.

The way from there up to Rechberg was quite far, and it took the children a good three-quarters of an hour before they came to the last steps and saw the lights from the windows in their house shining towards them, for it had meanwhile grown quite dark.

Already for an hour past the magistrate's wife had walked anxiously to and fro, first from the room out on the stone steps of the house, then down into the garden, looked around and then turned back, and after a little while, took the same walk over again.

She had not seen anything of the children since dinner and they were usually at home by four o'clock at coffee-time or even sooner. Their mother had allowed them to spend the free Saturday afternoon up in the woods, so they had run off all three of them in high spirits directly after dinner. But now it had grown quite dark and still not a sound of the children was to be heard anywhere. Where could they have been delayed so long? Or could something have happened to little Karl, who was not quite so strong on his feet? Every possible anxiety rose in the mother's mind and she ran more and more restlessly out and in and to all the windows.

But now—there were their well-known voices; they sounded quite excited although still far below. The mother ran out—to be sure, they were coming up the

hill, and as the children caught sight of her, they ran pell-mell one after the other, each trying to be the first to tell her their experience, but little Karl was now quite far behind. Kurt and Lissa rushed towards their mother almost together and were about to relate everything at the same time, but at that moment a loud voice sounded from the other side:

"Come to supper! Come to supper!"

It was the voice of the magistrate, who had just returned from his business and had strict household regulations.

When they were all quietly seated at the table, they began their story, but now it was not so easy, for the children had first to explain what had happened that they had not come home at coffee-time as they ought.

Finally it came out that Lissa had found it too dull in the little woods and had proposed that they climb up to the old linden tree. Since from there they could look down on the old chapel and the Ziller brook and the narrow footpath, Lissa had an irresistible desire to run there at once and see it all near to, for she had a pleasant memory of the swaying and trembling of the bridge on an earlier excursion there. The brothers consented and the journey was undertaken in haste. Finally it had proved to be much farther than it had appeared.

When the children had confessed the forbidden journey, which was followed by a warning not to carry out such a sudden idea again, then came the whole story in full force, first about the chapel, then the two children,

then the flock of sheep and afterwards everything all over again from the beginning and in still greater detail. Finally came the description of the jolly crossing over the brook, and what had happened there. This description naturally resulted in their father's strictly forbidding any future expeditions to the Ziller brook. The swaying bridge was a contrivance against which the magistrate had long protested, but still the rickety means of crossing remained.

"Karl, the fat, is resting after his day's work, and yours must come to an end too," said their father, shaking the chair next him a little, on which Karl had fallen asleep, for he had made a great exertion. But it was not so easy to break this first good sleep, and the father seized the chair, and carried it together with the sleeper into the bedroom, and the other children followed him jumping and shouting at the huge joke. Finally their mother came and had no end of trouble to wake up the one and quiet the others.

From that day on, no breakfast, dinner or supper passed that the children did not break forth one after another and in every tone, with these words:

"If only we had a little lamb!"

Finally the magistrate had had enough of it.

One evening, when the mother was sitting with the children around the table, and little Karl, who was somewhat bored by the studies of the older ones, had just said for the sixteenth time:

"If we only had a little lamb ——" suddenly their

father opened the door wide and in sprang a real, live lamb. The little creature was covered with curly snow-white wool and the prettiest the children had ever seen. Such shouts of delight, such a noise was raised in the room that not a word could be understood, for the lamb ran bunting and bleating from one corner of the room to the other, because it could find no way out and all three children ran after it, screaming with delight. But suddenly sounded their father's loud voice:

"Now, that is enough! First of all the little lamb is coming to its brand new stall and you come too, and listen to what I have to say."

The children went out with the lamb. They wondered very much where the new stall for the little creature could be, and how it looked.

To be sure, there was a little partition of brand new boards put up in the back of the stable, and in it lay fine, soft straw for the lamb to sleep on. A little crib had also been brought in, where they could throw grass and hay for the creature and other good things, which would taste good to it.

When the lamb had been put to bed on the straw, and lay quite still, only breathing a little anxiously, the father said it must now go to sleep, closed the low door, and beckoned the children to follow him.

Inside the room he sat down, placed the three children in front of him, raised his fore-finger high and said earnestly:

"Now listen to me well and think about what I say.

I have taken the little lamb away from its mother, to give it to you. Now you must take the mother's place, watch over it carefully and tend it so that it will be content with you and not die of homesickness. You may take it out in every free hour, to play with you and go to walk with you. You can take it to the pasture so it can crop the grass for itself; you can go with it wherever you like. But never must you leave the little creature alone, not for a moment, for it is still too small to find its way; it would run away at once, and never find its stall and miserably perish. Whoever takes it out of the stable, must keep it under his eyes until he brings it back again to its place. Have you understood me well and will you care for the lamb exactly as I have said, or if you would rather not, tell me and I will take it to-night back to its mother?"

The children all three cried out, that their father should leave the lamb with them. They would not give it back at any price. All three promised from their hearts, and with all sincerity, to watch over it and care for it, as their father required, and never for a moment to leave the creature standing or running alone, and each one assured him that he himself would always bring back the lamb to the stable, when it was time, for that would be the greatest delight. But their father said that would be unsafe; it must be decided that whoever took the lamb out must bring it back again and so it must remain. Once more the children promised to treat the lamb exactly as their father had ordered, and all

three gave him their hand on it, and all three were so full of excitement at the prospect of having a live lamb to keep for their own, that they could not go to sleep that evening for the longest time. Even sleepy little Karl sat quite upright in his bed and exclaimed again and again to Kurt:

"Papa shall see that the lamb will come to no harm with us, I will look out for that."

III

WHAT KEEPING SILENT DOES

The principal question on the following day was what name to give the lamb. Lissa proposed to give it the name of "Eulalia," for her friend's cat was called this, and the name seemed to her especially grand. But her brothers wouldn't listen to that, for they thought it too long. Kurt suggested the name Nero, as the big dog he so much admired down at the mill was called. But Lissa and Karl wouldn't have the lamb called by the same name as the dog with the broad nose. Then they consulted their mother about it, and she suggested that the little creature be called "Curly-Head," after its own peculiarity. The children agreed at once to this name, and so it was called from that time on. The pleasure all three took in the pretty white Curly-Head surpassed every other joy and amusement. In every

free moment it was taken out of its stall and led around here and there.

Sometimes all three children went out together and took Curly-Head up to the pasture or to the woods, and sat down there with it. Sometimes Lissa would sit on the bench and the little creature would lay its head trustfully in her lap, while Kurt and Karl would run to the near-by clover field and bring some of the fine spicy leaves, which Curly-Head would eat with the greatest satisfaction, first from the hand of one and then from that of the other, bleating very contentedly meanwhile.

At other times one of the children would go alone to take the lamb out of the stable and bring it along to walk, if some errand had to be done at the mill or the baker's or the old washwoman's. Then the lamb always went gladly by the side of its leader, and seemed to understand quite well what was said to it by Kurt and Lissa and especially by its great friend Karl, on these walks. It would answer now and then with an assenting joyful bleat and at the same time look up at its companion so understandingly, that there was no doubt that Curly-Head always took a lively part in the conversation. Every day it became more trustful and affectionate with the children. It would always press close to the one who took it out of the stall, as if its own mother had come, and the children loved it more and more every day and cared for it and watched over it, and always after their walks and happy conversation

brought it back to its little house in the stable, and to its nice bed of straw.

Curly-Head grew so finely with this excellent care that it became as round as a ball, and with its snow-white curly wool looked as pretty and clean as if it were always wearing its Sunday dress.

Thus the beautiful, sunny Autumn came to an end, and November had arrived more quickly than the children had ever known it before. Now they could begin to talk about Christmas, since the festival would be coming in the very next month. Kurt and Karl could easily unite the pleasures of the present to the hopes of the future and bind them into a double enjoyment. So they took a constant delight in their Curly-Head and on every one of their walks told it about all the wonderful times that Christmas would bring them and all the things they secretly expected from the Christ-child. Curly-Head always listened very attentively and the brothers did not fail to give it the expectation of surely having its share in the Christmas presents. All three for the most part enjoyed these wonderful prospects together and became each day more and more confidential with one another.

Lissa had a little different disposition. When a new and great delight was in prospect she became so excited about it, and all her thoughts were so full of it that the old pleasures were a little in the background.

Now Lissa had a particular friend in the big farm-house on the path down to the brook, the agreeable

RAPPAHANNOCK
LIBRARY

Marie, who always entered into all Lissa's ideas. Lissa was eager to visit this friend now because she could discuss with her quite otherwise about her hopes and expectations for Christmas-time, than with her brothers, who cherished such different wishes and did not understand hers aright.

Her mother allowed her to make the visit, and on the first free afternoon Lissa was to go. She had hardly patience enough to hold still, while her mother wound around her neck a warm scarf, which the cold November wind made very necessary. Then she ran and bounded away and her mother watched the child until she was half-way down the hill, then went back into the house.

In a moment it occurred to Lissa that the way was rather long and it would be less tiresome to take Curly-Head for a companion, if her brothers had not already taken her away. She turned quickly round, ran to the stable, found Curly-Head lying quietly on the straw, took it out quickly and ran with it down the barren path over which the wind blew the bright-colored Autumn leaves around her. Their continual running brought them in a short time to the end of their journey. Soon Lissa walked out with her friend, absorbed in deep conversation, back and forth in the sunny place in front of the house, while Curly-Head nibbled contentedly by the hedge which surrounded the garden. The friends refreshed themselves between long discussions, with sweet pears and juicy red apples, which were at hand

in rich abundance, for Marie's mother had brought out a whole big basket full of the fruit, and what the children couldn't eat, Lissa was to take home. It had always been so, for on the farm grew beautiful apples and pears in great quantities.

When it was time for Lissa to return home, her friend started along the path to accompany her, and they still had so much to say that they came to the last little ascent to Lissa's father's house, they knew not how. Marie departed quickly and Lissa hurried up the path. It was already quite dark. When she reached the house, it went through her mind like a paralyzing flash:

"Where is Curly-Head?"

She knew she had taken it along, then had seen it grazing by the hedge, and then had entirely forgotten it and paid no more attention to it. In the most terrible fright she rushed down the mountain, calling in every direction: "Curly-Head! Curly-Head! Where are you? Oh, come here! Come here!" but all was still, Curly-Head was nowhere to be seen. Lissa ran back to the farmhouse. There was already a light from the windows of the living-room. From the stone steps she could see very well inside. They were all sitting at the table at supper, father, mother, and Marie, her brothers, the servants, and on the seat by the stove lay the old cat. But nowhere was a sign of Curly-Head to be seen, as Lissa spied into every corner. Then Lissa ran around the house, into the garden, all around the hedge and again into the garden, and then all along the hedge

inside, always calling "Curly-Head, come here! Oh, come here!" It was all in vain; there was no sign of the lamb to be seen or heard. Lissa's anxiety increased more and more. It grew still darker and the wind howled louder and louder, and almost blew her off the ground. She must go home. What should she do? She did not dare tell that she had lost Curly-Head, because she had forgotten it. But she would tell her mother. She ran as fast as she could up the mountain. At home everything was ready for supper, even her father was there. Lissa came running into the room, so red and hot and disheveled, that her mother said:

"You cannot come to the table so, child; go and make yourself tidy."

And her father added:

"Above all you must not come home so late! Now hurry and come right back at once or you will have nothing to eat."

Lissa obeyed quickly. She suddenly felt that she would much rather not return to supper at all, but that would not do. She came back to her place dejected. She was frightfully anxious about what further remarks and questions would be made. But before any one could address a word to her the attention of all the members of the family was taken by a new occurrence.

Hans, the man-servant, put his head in at the door and said:

"With your permission, Magistrate, although the

children are all in the house, as Trina said, the little lamb is not in the stable."

"What?" exclaimed the Magistrate. "Here's a pretty state of things! Who took it out? Who did it?"

"I didn't!"—"I didn't!"—"Surely I didn't!"—"I didn't either!" screamed Kurt and Karl so noisily together, that no one could hear whether Lissa kept silent or cried out.

Their mother said to quiet them:

"Don't be so noisy. It surely cannot have been Lissa. In the afternoon she ran off alone to her friend Marie's, and only came back a few minutes ago."

"Then it is one of you two," quickly spoke their father, as he cast a penetrating look towards the two boys.

A terrible outcry was raised in reply:

"I didn't do it!"—"I didn't do it!"—"I surely didn't"—and both gazed with such big, honest eyes at their father, that he immediately exclaimed:

"No, no, you are not the ones. Then Hans must have left the stable door open, where the lamb was, and it must have run out at that moment. But it seems to me so unlikely, I must go and see."

Their father left the room, in order to investigate outside in the stable.

When the excitement, the accusations and the defense were over, another impression gained the upper hand. Suddenly Karl laid his head on his arm and sobbed aloud and mournfully:

"Now Curly-Head is lost —! We shall never have it again. Now it will starve to death!"

Then Kurt began. He cried aloud: "Yes, now it is growing colder all the time, and it won't have anything to eat and will freeze and starve to death."

Then Lissa began to weep and groan harder than the other two. She didn't say a word, but one could hear how much keener and deeper than her brothers' her grief was, and Lissa well knew why.

Later on when Kurt and Karl had long been asleep on their pillows and were having happy dreams about Curly-Head, Lissa lay restless in her bed and could not go to sleep. Not only was she mourning for the misfortune to the lamb, now wandering about distressed and neglected in the night, but she blamed herself for it and besides she had kept silent when she should have confessed.

Lissa had indeed not cried out: "I didn't do it! I didn't do it!" but she had kept silent when her mother had said confidently: "Lissa cannot have done it," and the child felt decidedly that she had done the same wrong to keep silent, as if she had told an untruth. Lissa was very unhappy and could find no consolation and no rest, until she made up her mind to tell her mother everything in the morning; perhaps then Curly-Head would be found.

On the following morning there was bright sunshine, and it was at once decided at breakfast that they would all three go out, as soon as school was over, to look for

Curly-Head, for it must be somewhere about. In the afternoon they would do the same, and all were convinced that the lamb would be found before evening. Their mother said to console the children that their father had sent Hans out very early to look everywhere for the little creature, so there was every hope that it would be found again. Lissa was the happiest over this prospect and thought that she wouldn't need to say anything now, and that everything would turn out all right again.

That day the whole of Rechberg was searched for the lamb, and in every home inquiries were made about it, but it was as if Curly-Head had disappeared from the earth. Nobody had seen it, nowhere was any trace of it to be found. For some days further they searched and inquired for it, but always in vain. Then the Magistrate said they had done enough, and it was useless to hunt any more, for either the poor little creature was no longer alive or else it had strayed far away.

A few days after, the first snow fell, and the flakes came down so big and thick that in a short time the whole garden lay deep in it, and the white covering rose half-way up the hedge. Every year the children were hugely delighted at the first snow, and always shouted and screamed the louder, the more the flakes whirled around.

Now they were quite still and one would peep here and another there out of the window, and each in the stillness thought of Curly-Head, if it were lying some-

where under the cold snow, or wanted to wade out and couldn't, and was calling in its well-known voice piteously for help and no one heard and helped it.

Then their father came home at evening and said:

"It is a bitter cold night, the snow is already frozen hard. If the poor lamb is still outdoors and not dead already, it will perish to-night. I wish I had never brought the poor creature home!"

Karl broke into such a cry of lamentation and Kurt and Lissa, filled to overflowing with their grief, joined in as if their hearts would break, so that their father left the room, and their mother tried to comfort them as well as she could.

From that time on the Magistrate never spoke of the lamb again, and their mother talked to them about the beautiful Christmas festival whenever they began to mourn for Curly-Head. She told them the Christ-child was coming to make every heart glad, and that this festival was coming soon and would make them happy again too.

When the sympathetic Karl would begin to mourn again on cold, dark evenings: "If only Curly-Head wouldn't freeze or shiver to death outside!" then his mother would say consolingly:

"See, Karl, the dear Lord cares for the little creature. He can prepare a warm bed somewhere for Curly-Head and let it be well with it. And although it is no longer with us, and we can't take care of it, let us be happy and give Curly-Head into the dear Lord's hands."

Kurt listened attentively while his mother was consoling Karl, and so it came about that the brothers gradually became quite happy again, to leave Curly-Head entirely to the dear Lord and His care, and every day they looked forward more gladly and with fuller expectation to the beautiful Christmas-time. But Lissa was not happy with them. On her lay, as it were, a heavy weight completely crushing her, and that would never, never more let her be happy. At night she dreamed she saw Curly-Head half starved and frozen, lying out in the snow, and looking up at her with such sad eyes, saying:

"You did this!"

Then Lissa would wake crying and later, when she wanted to be merry with her brothers, she couldn't, for she kept thinking all the time: if the two knew that she had done it, how they would reproach her! She no longer dared look her father and mother straight in the eyes, for she had kept silent when she ought to have confessed to them, and now she couldn't let it pass her lips, for she had let her parents believe for so long that she knew nothing about the matter.

So Lissa never had a happy moment more, and every day she looked sadder and more sorrowful and when Kurt and Karl came to her and said:

"Cheer up, Lissa; Christmas is coming nearer every day, and just think of all that can happen!" then the tears would come at once into Lissa's eyes, and half crying she would say:

"I can't be happy any more, never, never more, even at Christmas-time."

This seemed too sad to the sympathetic Karl, and he would say to her, quite consolingly:

"See, Lissa, when you can't do anything more, give everything up to the dear Lord, and then you will be happy again, if you haven't done anything wrong. Mamma said so."

Then Lissa would begin to cry in good earnest, so that Karl became frightened and he ran right away, as Kurt had already done before, for it seemed to them very disagreeable that Lissa was so changed.

But Lissa's altered behavior did not escape her mother. She often watched the child for a long time in silence, but she asked her no questions.

IV

WHAT THE DEAR LORD SENDS

November came to an end. The snow had become still deeper, and every day the cold became more intense. The grandmother in Altkirch pulled her thin bed-covering this way and that, for she could hardly keep warm any longer under it. The room was also cold, for there was only a very small supply of wood, and in this deep snow no brushwood could be found. Coffee was seldom made and the beans had now to be crushed

always with stones; the mill was utterly useless, and there was no money for a new one. The poor grandmother had much to mourn over and complain about. The grandfather sat most of the time on the bench by the stove, trying to console her misery and weaving his little baskets the while.

As long as it continued to snow, and the deep snow was soft, the grandfather had been obliged to carry his baskets himself to the dairyman, for if he had sent the children, they would have stuck fast in the drifts. There was no road broken out up the mountain, so the grandfather had trouble to get through, he sank so many times deep in the snow-banks.

But now the sky was clear, and the high snow fields were frozen hard far and wide, so that one could go over them as over a firm road. Not once under the heaviest man did the ice-crust crack. Now the children could be sent again on their errand. Stanzeli wrapped a shawl around her, Seppli put on his woolen cap, and then they started off each with a bundle of baskets on the arm. After a good half hour, when they came to the chapel, Stanzeli laid her baskets down and took Seppli by the hand to go inside. But Seppli was obstinate again:

"I will not come, I will not pray now. My fingers are freezing," he asserted and planted his feet on the ground, so that Stanzeli should not move him forward. But she begged and pulled him and reminded him what Father Klemens had said and was quite distressed as

if Seppli would prevent some great good to them both. Stanzeli had already heard and understood so much about trouble and misery, that it seemed to her a great good fortune and consolation to be allowed to kneel down and pray to a father in heaven, who would help all poor people. Seppli at last yielded and they went into the silent chapel. Stanzeli said her prayer softly and reverently. Suddenly a strange plaintive cry sounded through the great stillness. A little frightened, Stanzeli turned to Seppli and said softly:

"Don't do so in the chapel. You must be quiet."

Just as softly but cross Seppli replied:

"I am not doing it. You are."

In a moment the cry sounded again, but louder. Seppli looked searchingly at a place by the altar. Suddenly he seized Stanzeli by the arm and pulled her with such force from her seat, and to the altar, that she could do nothing but follow. Here, at the foot of the altar, half covered with the altar cloth, under which it had crawled, lay a white lamb, trembling and shivering with cold, and its thin little legs stretched out, as if it couldn't move any longer, from exhaustion.

"That is a sheep. Now something has been sent to us, that we can see," explained Seppli with delight.

Stanzeli looked at the animal with great astonishment. The words of Father Klemens at once came to her mind, and she did not doubt that the dear Lord, who sends something to every one who prays, had sent the lamb to-day to them. Only Stanzeli didn't quite understand

why it was lying there so feeble and half dead. She began to stroke the little creature, and to show it that it mustn't be afraid, but it could hardly move and only from time to time gave a very pitiful cry.

"Let's take it home and give it a potato: it is hungry," said Seppli, for hunger was the only evil he could think of and this had made him cry.

"What are you thinking about, Seppli? We must go up to the dairyman's," the dutiful Stanzeli reminded him. "But we can't leave it here so alone," and the child looked thoughtfully at the little animal, breathing with such difficulty.

"Now I know something we can do," continued Stanzeli, after a few minutes' consideration. "You watch the lamb here, and I will run as fast as I can up to the dairyman's and come right back and then we will go home!"

Seppli agreed to the proposal and Stanzeli immediately ran off, and shot over the snow field like a doe.

Seppli sat down on the floor and looked with satisfaction at his present. The lamb was covered with such lovely thick wool, that shivering Seppli felt a desire to put his cold hand into it, and it grew so warm, he quickly put in the other. Then he drew close to the lamb and it was like a little stove for him, and although it was shivering with the cold, its woolen pelt was a splendid means of warming Seppli.

In a short half hour Stanzeli came running back again, and the children in their delight then wanted to

take their present home to their grandfather and grandmother. But they tried in vain to bring the lamb to its feet, it was so weak, it fell right over again, when they had lifted it a little and then it moaned pitifully.

"We must carry it," said Stanzeli, "but it is too heavy for me; you must help me," and she showed Seppli how to take hold of the lamb without hurting it, and so they carried it away together. They went rather slowly, for it was quite awkward to walk with the burden between them, but the children were so delighted with their present, that they didn't stop until they reached home and then rushed into the room with their surprise.

"We have brought a lamb, a live lamb, with very warm wool!" cried Seppli as he entered, and when they were wholly inside the room, the children laid the lamb down beside their astonished grandfather on the bench by the stove. Then Stanzeli began to relate how it had all happened, and how it had happened exactly as Father Klemens had always told them, that the dear Lord sent every one who prayed something, only it could not always be seen.

"But to-day it can be seen," broke in Seppli with delight.

The grandfather looked at the grandmother to see what she thought about it, and she looked at him and said:

"What do you think about it, Joseph? Tell me."

After some reflection the grandfather said: "Some one must go up to Father Klemens, and ask him what

he thinks. I believe I will go myself." Whereupon he got up from his seat, put on his old fur cap and went out.

Father Klemens came back with the grandfather. After he had greeted the grandmother and spoken a few kind words with her, he sat down beside the little lamb lying there almost dead, and looked at it. Then he placed Stanzeli and Seppli in front of him and said:

"See, children, it is so; when a man prays, the dear Lord sends him a happy and trustful heart, and that is a beautiful gift, and on that depend many other good gifts. But the lamb here has lost its way. It may belong to the big flock, which passed by late in the Autumn, and the shepherd will be asking for it. It must have been lost a long time for it is quite starved and almost dead. We may not be able to save its life. First we must give it a little warm milk, and then see what more it can take."

The kind Father with these last words had lifted the lamb a little and gently laid his hand under its head.

Then the grandfather said hesitatingly:

"We will do what we can. Stanzeli, go and see if there is a little milk left."

But Father Klemens prevented Stanzeli from going out, saying: "I think you needn't go. If it is all the same to you, I will take the lamb home with me. I have room enough, and I can care for it."

This was a great relief to both the old people, for they didn't want to let the lamb die of hunger, and they didn't know where to get anything to feed it.

Then Father Klemens took the feeble lamb on his arm and went with it up to the old monastery. Seppli watched him for a long time and grumbled a little.

After a few days the grandfather saw Father Klemens coming to his cottage, and said wonderingly to the grandmother:

"Why do you think the good Father is coming to us again?"

"The lamb must be dead, and now he will tell us that we mustn't expect a penny of reward from the shepherd," remarked the grandmother.

Father Klemens came in. One could see that he had no glad tidings to bring. Stanzeli and Seppli came bounding towards him to give him their hands. He stroked both kindly, then said softly to the grandfather:

"I think it is best for you to send the children away for a little while, as I have something to tell you."

This was somewhat disturbing to the grandfather, and he thought to himself:

"If I could only get the grandmother out of the way for a little, so she wouldn't hear if something unpleasant has to be told."

He put the tin can on Stanzeli's arm and said:

"Go now with Seppli and get the milk, and if it is still too early, you can wait at the farm. It is warm in the cow-shed."

When the children had gone, the Father pushed his chair nearer the grandmother's bed and said:

"Come a little nearer too, Joseph, I must tell you

both something, but I do it unwillingly. Sepp has done something wrong."

He had scarcely spoken these words when the grandmother made a fearful outcry and said over and over again:

"Oh, my God, that I should live to see this! It was my last hope that Sepp would still turn round and come home, and stand by us in our old age, and now it is all over with. Perhaps we shall have to bear a great disgrace and yet we have lived to old age in honor and good report. Oh, how willingly I would stop grumbling and lie on my hard bed without complaint, and never more have a good drop of coffee, if only this wouldn't have to happen to Sepp! Oh, if only he hadn't brought misfortune and disgrace to himself and us!"

The grandfather too sat there looking very much alarmed and cast down.

"What has he done, Father?" he asked hesitatingly. "Is it something wicked?"

The Father replied that he didn't know at all what it was; he had only learned that Sepp had done something wrong over across the Ziller brook and it had been brought to the Magistrate in Rechberg, who was going to have him put in prison.

"Oh, my God, did it happen up there?" the grandmother broke forth again. "Oh, what will be done to him! He will surely punish him severely enough because he has a different belief."

"No, no, you mustn't take it so, grandmother," in-

terrupted the Father in defense, " that is not so. The Magistrate is not unjust, and he thinks well of the faith. I have myself more than once heard him say: ' A pious and God-fearing man on this side of the Ziller brook and such an one on the other side both pray to the same Father in Heaven, and the prayer of one is exactly as acceptable to Him as that of the other.' I have known the Magistrate up there for many years, and I can tell you that I have many hundred times had edifying conversations with him and his wife, as we sat together, and we have understood each other so well that we always get along perfectly and I reproach myself when I haven't been there for a long time. Now I have it in mind to go there very soon and to see how it stands with Sepp, and to speak a good word with the Magistrate for him."

Both the old people were very glad and thankful for this plan, but the grandmother began to grieve again and said mournfully:

" If only I hadn't done wrong, so that this misfortune might not have come to us, because I complained and grieved over little things. But I will surely do it no more and will be patient, Father Klemens. What do you think? Will our Father in Heaven take away my penance and not punish me so hard? "

The Priest comforted the grandmother and exhorted her to keep her good resolutions. Then he rose and promised her to come again as soon as he had been up to Rechberg and could bring news of Sepp.

The grandfather accompanied the Father to the front

of the house; then he asked: "And how is it with the little lamb? Is it living still, or is it dead?"

"Not at all dead," replied Father Klemens gladly, "round and full, and already jumping about merrily, and it is such a trusting little creature, that I shall be sorry to give it up when the shepherd comes by again. I have sent him word that the lamb is with me, so he will probably leave it until he comes into the neighborhood, and now God bless you!"

The Priest shook the grandfather's hand and went hastily away, for he had to comfort other sick people who were anxiously waiting for him. In all Altkirch and far beyond, kind Father Klemens was the comforter of all the poor and sick.

V

CHRISTMAS

THE longed for Christmas day had come. From early morning Kurt and Karl had wandered in a fever of excitement from one room to another and up and down stairs and nowhere could they find a resting place, for the overpowering sense of the approaching good fortune drove them round and round. By constant motion they had the feeling that they could reach the evening more quickly.

Lissa sat quite still in a corner and gave no response

when her brothers came to her and wanted her to join in their exalted hopes. Lissa had never experienced such a Christmas day. Usually how full of happy unrest and burning expectation she was! How full of gladness and joy she was, for she knew nothing more splendid than these hours of expectation and then suddenly their fulfillment! The fulfillment of all the many, many wishes in the brilliant glory of the lights! Now she sat there and wanted to be happy like her brothers. But a pressing weight, as it were, lay on her, stifling every feeling of joy, and although she tried to force herself to throw it off and forget it all, and take delight in the evening, as before, it seemed to her as if she suddenly heard some one coming, who had found Curly-Head dead and knew that she had lost it and forgotten it, and was going to tell her father. Then she crept deeper into the corner and listened hard, and all joy was gone; it came no more into her heart.

Towards evening Kurt and Karl had finally found a moment of rest, or rather the excitement, which had now reached its highest point, had brought them both together on one chair, where in pleasant expectation they only ventured to speak together in low tones.

"What do you suppose about a croquet-set with colored balls?" whispered Karl. "Do you believe the Christ-child will think of that?"

"Perhaps," answered Kurt softly, "but do you know what? I would much rather He would think of a new sled, for you see the 'Kessler' doesn't go well and then

we have only the 'Geiss,' and if Lissa gets to be happy again, you will see how she will coast, that I know, and then we shall never have the 'Geiss,' and there isn't room enough for us both on the 'Kessler.'"

"Yes, but think of the fort. Do you know, Kurt, how many thousand times we have wanted a fort?" reminded Karl; "we would almost rather go without a sled, don't you think so?"

"Yes, indeed," said Kurt hesitatingly, for a new thought had come to his mind.

"Or supposing the Christ-child should bring us a box of colors and we could paint the big soldier picture-sheets?"

"Oh, oh!" groaned Karl, impressed with the charming possibility.

Then their mother came into the room.

"Children," she said, beckoning with her finger, "in there the lights are burning by the piano. Now we are going to sing a song. Where is Lissa?"

In the twilight her mother had not noticed that Lissa was sitting in the corner, nor did her brothers know it. She hadn't made a sound. Now she came out and all went over to the piano. Then their mother sat down and played and began to sing. Kurt and Karl joined in at the top of their voices and Lissa sang very softly. And when they came to these words in the song:

Jesus is greater, Jesus is greater
Who fills our sad hearts with joy—

Karl sang with such deafening gayety that one could see he had no sad heart at this time. But Lissa had felt what it is to have a sad heart. She sobbed and sobbed and couldn't sing any more. When they had sung to the end of the song the mother rose and said:

"Now stay here quietly until I come back." But Lissa ran after her and cried pitifully:

"Mamma! Mamma! Can't I ask you something?"

Her mother led the child into her sleeping-room and asked what she wanted.

"Mamma, can Jesus make every single sad heart glad again?" asked Lissa anxiously.

"Yes, child, every one," answered her mother, "every one who leans on Him. Only He can't make those happy who cling to wrong-doing and will not give it up."

Then Lissa broke into loud crying.

"I will not cling to it any more," she sobbed. "I will tell you. I took Curly-Head away with me and then forgot it and lost it, and then I kept silent about it, and I am to blame for its starving and freezing and I can't be happy any more, about anything."

Then her mother drew Lissa to her affectionately and said consolingly:

"Now you know, dear child, how a wrong that we keep fast in our hearts makes us frightfully unhappy. You must remember that, and never do so again. But now you have repented, and the holy Christ can and will enter your heart and make you happy again, for to-day He will make all hearts glad. Now wipe your tears

away and go to your brothers. I will come to you soon."

Such a weight was lifted from Lissa's heart, and she felt so light and free, that she wanted to jump over all the mountains. All of a sudden she keenly realized:

"To-day is Christmas! What great things may happen to-day?" Everything in her rejoiced. But one single shadow still rose at times in her heart: Curly-Head! Where could the starved Curly-Head be lying?

When Lissa ran jumping to her brothers, they were very much surprised, but Karl said:

"I am glad you are like this. I thought you would be happy again at Christmas."

Then Lissa had to give vent to her happy excitement and freshly awakened hopes to her brothers; but in the midst of her eager communications, the door-bell rang louder and louder, and Karl, snow-white with excitement, exclaimed:

"The Christ-child!"

Immediately the mother opened the door and a flood of light came in from outside—the children rushed towards it.

Then it streamed and shimmered and sparkled around, and from its wonderful splendor one could hardly tell what it all was. But in the middle stood a big fir-tree with bright, glistening lights from top to bottom on all the branches, and rosy angels and shining Summer birds hovering around the lights, and red strawberries, and shining cherries, and golden pears and little apples

hanging from all the twigs, and the children ran in speechless delight to and fro around the tree. But all at once something came running in and suddenly Lissa was almost thrown down; she gave a huge cry of joy and—really there was little Curly-Head! Round as a ball, lively and roguish, it rushed to Lissa and rubbed its little head against her and bleated loud for joy. Kurt and Karl hurried along at the well-known sound and could hardly believe what they saw. Curly-Head, neither hungry nor frozen but quite alive and merry, was there again! They hugged it tight for love and joy.

But Karl now caught sight of something. He gave a high jump to one side:

"Kurt, Kurt," he screamed, "the fort! the fort!" But Kurt had already jumped to the other side and called back:

"Come here! Come here! Here is the new sled! Oh, what a splendid sled!" And as Karl ran to look, he cried out again:

"Oh! oh! there is the box of colors! Oh, so many brushes in it!"

Lissa kept hugging and caressing little Curly-Head for its return was to her the dearest gift. Oh, how happy she would be now! Everything, everything that had troubled her was past, everything was all right again! How was it possible?

All at once Lissa saw two eyes, wide open, gazing at the shining tree in motionless wonder. That must really be Seppli. Lissa rose from the floor, where she had

been squatting beside Curly-Head—to be sure, there was Stanzeli too beside Seppli looking in astonishment at all the brilliant splendor. Lissa went to the children.

"Did you come to see me to-day, Stanzeli?" she asked. "Isn't the tree beautiful? Did you know the Christ-child would come to-day?"

"Oh, no! oh, no!" said Stanzeli quite shyly and softly, "but your mother brought us in. To-day Father Klemens said the lamb belonged to you, and we might bring it up here."

"So did you bring little Curly-Head? But where from, Stanzeli? Where was it then? How can it be so well and look so?"

Then her mother came and said to Lissa she would tell her all about it, but now she must bring the children to the table by the window, for the Christ-child had remembered them too. But at first no urging could move Seppli from the spot, for he had never in his life seen such a shining tree with alluring, shimmering, wonderful things on every bough. He couldn't turn his eyes away from it. He took absolutely no step forward although the invitation sounded enticing. Finally Lissa said:

"Just come, Seppli. There by the table you can see the tree quite splendidly, and besides, you can see what the Christ-child has brought you."

Then Seppli moved slowly and without taking his eyes from the tree. But the table gave him a sight he had not expected. On a plate lay the largest ginger-

cake he had ever seen, and round it lay red apples and a big pile of nuts. And near these lay a strong knapsack in which he could carry everything he needed for school so that nothing would be lost. And the book, and slate and pencil and everything he would need from Easter on was inside. Next it lay a good strong jacket for Seppli, such as he had never had before in his life. When Lissa said, "These belong to you, Seppli," he stood, as if petrified, by the table and looked first at Stanzeli to see if she believed it was true, and then again at his treasures.

Neither could Stanzeli look enough at the warm little gown and the wonderful fitted work-box, standing together beside the plate of ginger-bread.

But now she was frightened, for the Magistrate came straight to her with a man, who had been standing by the door with Hans and Trina, and said:

"Look over there. She really doesn't know you any more."

Then he went away.

The man held out his hand:

"Give me your hand, Stanzeli," he said; "don't be so strange to me! Your eyes look exactly like your blessed mother's. Come, speak, Stanzeli. I am your father and you look exactly like her." And he had to wipe his eyes again and again.

"We have only a grandfather and a grandmother," explained Seppli, who had been watching everything.

"No, no, surely, Seppli, you have a father too, and

I am he," said his father, taking each of the children by the hand. "I will surely prove it to you, but you must know me. Stanzeli, won't you be friendly with your father? You have grown to be exactly like your mother."

The man had to keep wiping his eyes.

"Yes, I am now," said Stanzeli timidly, "but I don't know you at all."

The Magistrate from a little distance had been watching the little group by the table, and now he stepped towards them again.

"Sepp," he said earnestly, "I know a father and a mother too, who are grieved because their son no longer knows them, and has no kind word and no grateful service for them, who have cared for his children so well. But to-day is Christmas; to-day every one must be happy. Go, Sepp, harness the brown horse to the sleigh. You shall take your children home. I will leave the rest to you."

"May God reward the Magistrate, may God reward you a thousand times!" said Sepp, who could hardly speak from emotion. "The Magistrate shall surely be pleased with me, just as surely as I hope the Lord will be merciful to my poor soul!"

"Good! good! Now up and away, Sepp, and that goes with the sleigh," and the Magistrate pointed to a big bundle lying next the table by the children. Sepp took it on his shoulders and went out.

Then all the presents belonging to Stanzeli and

Seppli were packed together, and the children took their departure, and it was decided that in the Spring Seppli and Stanzeli should come back again the first fine Sunday, and then Lissa and her brothers would also go to Altkirch, for they wanted as soon as possible to visit Father Klemens with Curly-Head, and thank him for his good nursing.

Then Trina took each child by the hand, to tuck them into the sleigh, and the mother called out to her again and again:

"Trina, wrap them up tight in the big sleigh-robe so that they will not freeze."

In the house, under the Christmas tree, the joy and merriment over the many, many wonderful gifts spread out there, lasted for a long, long time, and above all over the newly returned, merry bleating Curly-Head.

About the time the strong brown horse with the sleigh drove away from the Magistrate's house, Father Klemens was coming down from the monastery along the moonlit footpath. He smiled with satisfaction to himself, as he thought of the visit he had made to Rechberg ten days before, and how it had been shown that Sepp was not so badly off as had been feared.

Sepp had run away from a master, who had treated him badly. The master was a rich and important farmer, who wouldn't put up with this. He made a great fuss and brought action against Sepp, and so the matter came before the Magistrate, but he said the workman should not be abused, no matter who the

master was, and Sepp could go his way. This much the Father had learned from the Magistrate himself, and then he told him something about Sepp's aged parents and his two children, and how that Sepp was not bad, only frivolous and how, since the loss of his wife, he had got on the wrong road, and if the Magistrate would give him some good advice, he could make an impression on him for the better. The Magistrate had then promised the Father to do so, and afterwards his wife had inquired about Willow-Joseph's household and the children, and so one thing led to another. Finally the Father had told about the lamb that the children had found and was now in his care. Then it suddenly came out to whom the lost lamb belonged, and that it was Curly-Head. Then the Magistrate and his wife showed great delight and they commissioned the Father to send the lamb over by the children on Christmas day, when they would have a festival with a Christmas tree.

This was an extraordinary joy to the kind Father, but he had not said a word about the Christmas tree, either to the old people or the children, and so he was now smiling quite contentedly to think of their surprise. And as he wanted to see their happy faces, and also hoped the old people would be a little happy, he was going in the darkness to the willow cottage.

As soon as he entered the room, the grandmother called out to him:

"God be praised that you have come, Father! We shall have a word of encouragement. It is already so

dark, and the children are still on the way and have to cross the brook. Oh, I hope nothing has happened to them."

"No, no, Grandmother," said the Father in a happy voice, "to-day we mustn't complain; to-day there is joy and the holy Christ watches especially over the children, and won't let anything happen to them. Now let us have a good talk; the time will pass best in that way, and you come here too, Joseph, and join us."

Meanwhile Sepp was letting the brown horse trot so that the sleigh seemed to fly, for he had been seized with such a longing to get home again that he couldn't go fast enough. He had not been there for six years, and whenever thoughts of home had now and then arisen, he had always seen only a great sadness and emptiness, such as he had found when Constance died. In order to escape from these thoughts Sepp had always gone farther away. But to-day, since he had seen his children, everything seemed different, and Stanzeli had brought her departed mother so vividly before his eyes, and all the happy days he had lived with her and his parents in the willow cottage, he thought he couldn't wait until he saw the house and his father and mother again.

Now the sleigh stopped by the willows. Sepp lifted his children out, and threw the thick robe over the brown horse. Then he took Stanzeli by one hand and Seppli by the other and went into the house. He was so overcome that he ran sobbing to the bed and cried:

"Mother! Father! Don't be angry with me any longer, and forgive me. I will truly do what I can, so that you will see better days. I know very well that you must have had hard times, but, God willing, you shall be better off from this time forth."

His father and mother had to weep for joy, and his mother said between her sobs:

"Oh, Sepp, Sepp, is it really possible! I never believed our Lord God could so change your heart, but now I will give praise and thanks as long as I have any breath in me."

And the father gave his hand to his son and said:

"It is all right, Sepp, everything shall be forgiven and forgotten, and be welcome. But tell how you happened to come with the children, and how you are."

First Sepp had to press Father Klemens's hand, for he had listened with a quiet smile of satisfaction to everything. Then the old people learned to their astonishment that the Magistrate had engaged Sepp as a farm-servant and had already trusted him with their horse and sleigh. Since Hans and Trina were going to establish a household of their own at New Year's, the place was open for a servant, and Sepp was highly delighted to take it.

"And what a place it is! Such a good master who can advise me like a father and besides such good wages and so much clothing all the year through, this I know from Hans. But I have begged the Magistrate not to give me any of my wages yet, so that I can't spend any

of it but bring it all to you at the end of the month. Now I really have nothing to bring you except good will."

"That is worth while, and may our Lord God give His blessing on it. Amen!" said Father Klemens.

For a long time Seppli had been wandering to and fro heavily laden, and could find no place for his treasures or attract any one's attention to them. But now he was able to get to his grandmother's bed, and soon had it half covered with his presents, and when Stanzeli saw this she came quickly along and covered the other half with hers. Their grandmother's head looked out from the midst of them as if it was a fair, and she had to clap her hands for wonder, and say again and again: "Is it possible!"

But when Sepp suddenly brought in the big bundle and unrolled it, and three and then four beautiful warm blankets came into sight, the grandmother could say no more from surprise and thankfulness, but kept her hands folded and surely was giving silent thanks again and again.

But the grandfather lifted the hard object, which was placed in the middle of the blankets, from the floor, and the old man's eyes shone with delight, for his own wish was fulfilled: he held up a brand new coffee-mill in his hand. Now at last he could grind the coffee properly and prepare the drink for the grandmother as it ought to be.

Such a Christmas evening, full of happiness and joy,

was never celebrated in Willow-Joseph's cottage before.

Sepp now experienced the longed for pleasure of having his children sit trustfully with him, Seppli on one knee, Stanzeli on the other, and each wanted to know their father better, for since they had seen how dear he was to their grandfather and grandmother, and belonged so near to them, they also loved him and were aware that they belonged to him.

Now Sepp had to go back to Rechberg, but he knew that he would soon return and could spend every Sunday afternoon with his people, for this the Magistrate had told him.

When he was seated in the sleigh, and was ready to drive away, Seppli ran out and cried:

"Father, wait. I must tell you something!" And when his father bent forward, Seppli said emphatically in his ear:

"Father, when you come past the chapel, don't forget to go in and pray, for you know the dear Lord always sends something to you there; at first you can't see it, but later on you do."

Seppli had noticed that all the rich gifts of this day were connected with the lamb, which the dear Lord had led into the chapel for them, and he well remembered how he had refused to go in. He would never do so again.

A great intercourse between Rechberg and Altkirch

is carried on. Sepp is a faithful and reliable servant in the Magistrate's house, and goes every Sunday afternoon to Altkirch, carrying fresh white bread to eat with the coffee. This tastes so good to the grandmother, as it comes from the new mill, together with other nourishing things from Rechberg, that she has gained new strength. Now she can work around the house again, herself, and receive Sepp cheerfully in the room put in order for Sunday, with the grandfather and the children, and that makes Sepp happy all the week, and he says to himself quietly: "Home is the best place, after all."

From time to time his children go to see him in Rechberg, and then there is always a merry day for all the children together, and Curly-Head is always by and plays with them, and often when it looks up at Lissa, she thinks:

"Oh, how happy I am once more! Never again in all my life will I conceal a wrong in my heart!"

The Rose Child

I

THE TIME OF ROSES

DIETRICH, the sheriff of Wildbach, who had once owned considerable property, had for several years been falling into bad ways and by this means had lost his position and his salary. His only occupation was cutting a few tufts of grass from his uncultivated fields, and carrying it home to feed his poor little goat; for himself and his foster-child there were only a few potatoes and a little milk.

After dinner Dietrich would vanish and not appear again until towards night to milk the goat. Then he was seen no more at home; but every one knew that he sat in the tavern until late at night, and that soon house and land and goat would be taken from him to pay his debts.

As long as his wife had lived things had gone better. They had had more land and a cow, and the wife had worked industriously early and late. They had never had any children of their own, but an orphan niece of Dietrich's had been living with them for three years. He had lost his wife the year before, and since then things had gone so rapidly from bad to worse that every one wondered at the child's fresh, blooming ap-

pearance. She was now eight years old and was everywhere called Rose-Resli, for she was never seen without a rose in her hand or in her mouth. Resli—her real name was Theresa—had such a love for roses, and gazed with her merry blue eyes so longingly into every garden where roses grew, that the owners inside would call out kindly: "Would you like one?" And Rose-Resli, beaming with delight, would stretch her little hand through the fence and receive her prize gratefully.

So the child was always seen surrounded with roses as soon as they began to bloom, and every one knew the blooming Rose-Resli and was fond of her.

She did not see much of her uncle. In the morning she went to school and at noon he usually said:

"I shall not be home to-night, but you will find something to eat."

But the cupboard was always empty. It was well that here and there a child at school gave Rose-Resli apples or pears, or even a slice of bread, and often when she had to go hungry, she could run freely to the gardens round about where the roses grew, and gather a few, and in this pleasure she would forget everything else.

To-day again the child had found no supper, but for all that she skipped happily across the meadows. It was a bright Summer evening. The butterflies were fluttering up and down in the blue air and high above the swallows flew round in a circle, twittering, summer-like, and all about in the meadows the crickets were

chirping merrily, so that Rose-Resli became more and more gladsome and jumped higher and higher as if she would fly away with the butterflies. Thus in a short time she came to a garden, which lay at a distance, on a wooded hill, and always had the most beautiful roses. The garden was surrounded by a wooden fence, and Rose-Resli quickly climbed up on the lower rail and looked longingly into the garden.

" Come right in," called a voice from behind the trees; " I know very well what you are looking for; to-day you shall have some more roses."

Rose-Resli didn't wait to be asked a second time. She stepped quickly inside, went straight to the fragrant rose-bed and looked in wonderment at the multitude of red and white, light and dark blossoms, glowing and giving forth their perfume together. Then the President's wife, the owner of the garden, came up to her. She had many times before given roses to Resli, and had just now called her to come in.

" You have come at just the right time to-day, Resli," she said. " You shall have a big bunch, but many of the roses are ready to fall, you see, so you must be a little quiet and not jump so high, as you usually do, or all the petals will fall off the flowers before you reach home."

Then the President's wife carefully cut a rose here and another there, and then two together, light and dark red and white ones, until she made a big, large, wonderful bouquet. Rose-Resli's eyes grew bigger and

bigger, for she had never held anything so wonderfully beautiful in her hand before. But here and there the fragrant petals were falling to the ground and the bare stems looked so sad among the other flowers, that Rose-Resli seemed quite alarmed.

"See! see!" said the lady warningly, "you will have to walk very slowly to your house, or you will not have three left with their petals on when you get there."

Rose-Resli thanked her politely and started on her way back. This led her past a miserable little hut where lived the "Sorrow-mother," a quiet woman with a sorrowful face. Rose-Resli had never heard her called anything else, and supposed that she had no other name.

"Sorrow-mother," called Resli, when she saw the old woman at the window, "see! see! Have you ever seen such roses?"

"No, Resli, not for a long time," replied the woman, and the child went on her way, quite absorbed in the sweetness and beauty of her flowers.

As Resli was passing the last house on the road, the woman of the house, called the Peasant Woman of the Cross-way, because she lived where two roads crossed, came out and, with both of her strong arms on her hips, looked at the child.

"Well, well, you are really a Rose-Resli to-day," she called to her; "come, show me your treasures close to."

Rose-Resli turned quickly around, and joyfully held her bouquet out to her. But with her quick movement

the petals dropped from three or four of the roses and fluttered to the ground. Resli looked at them sadly.

"Too bad," said the woman, "but they would be just right for me. Child, give me your roses and you shall have a good piece of bread for them. You can't carry them any farther. By the time you get home you will have nothing but stems in your hand. Come, give them to me."

"All my roses, and not have any to keep?" asked Resli, quite taken aback.

"You can keep one of them; see, this one, the others will fall right away. Come lay them in here, they mustn't be lost," and the peasant woman held out her apron. Resli laid her roses in it, all except one which she placed in the front of her little dress, where she almost always wore a rosebud. Then the peasant woman went into the house, and soon came back again with a big slice of bread in her hand, at sight of which the child suddenly realized for the first time that she was very hungry.

"Listen, Resli, I will give you some good advice," said the peasant woman, as she gave the bread to the child; "take a little basket, go, every evening, where there are roses growing, and ask for the ones that are ready to fall. Then put them right into the basket, so that you will not lose the leaves; for I need them, and every evening, if you will bring me a nice little pile of petals, you shall have a good big piece of bread. Will you do it?"

"Yes, surely," said Rose-Resli, and started on her way home, eating her bread, with great satisfaction.

When the child passed by the Sorrow-mother's cottage again, she was coming along home, carrying on her back the bundle of fagots she had gathered.

"What has become of your beautiful roses?" she asked, when the child came up to her. Resli told her the whole story, and how she was going to bring rose-leaves every day to the cross-road woman.

The Sorrow-mother listened thoughtfully; then she said timidly:

"Resli, won't you come to me to-morrow, before you take the roses to the peasant woman? I should like to ask you something then."

"Yes, I will do that, so sleep well, Sorrow-mother!"

Whereupon Resli went on her way. When she reached her uncle's distant cottage, she went into the silent, lonely room. She closed no door, made no light. Like a little bird she sought her nest in the gloaming and soon was sleeping peacefully. She dreamed of her roses, until the bright sun wakened her again.

II

A LITTLE HELPER AND GREAT HELP

THE woman whom the people had given the name of Sorrow-mother was a very poor widow. She had seen better days, and was not accustomed to beg; she

starved and suffered in silence, told her trouble only to the dear Lord, and sought in Him alone to find the consolation she needed. Her husband, who had been a tailor, died young and left her only one son. Like his father he was to be a tailor. This the boy's guardian had resolved upon, and he was the one to decide the matter. But Joseph did not like this; when he ought to be working at his trade, he ran away, and came home late at night or not at all. So he fell into bad company, and his guardian, who was also overseer of the parish, threatened, if he would not work and do well, to send him on the next transport to Australia.

Joseph was very much broken up by this and said that he could work, if they would let him do what he wanted, and if he could go away from home without being sent.

Then he disappeared and never came back. His mother mourned for him greatly, but she gave her child up to the dear Lord, and when the people in the village said scornfully:

"What good has it been for you to pray so much? You are living in poverty with your sorrow, and Joseph will die in poverty far away." Then she would answer:

"If I have to remain a sorrowing mother to the end and have to die in poverty, I will not lose my faith that Joseph will return to the right way, for I have from the beginning and always, again and again, given him into the dear Lord's keeping and have prayed for him so much, that it cannot be in vain."

The next day, as soon as school was over, Rose-Resli started off. The child did not own a basket, but she could pile the roses in her apron. Skipping merrily along, she came to the large garden, where the President's wife was wandering about among her flowers.

"Would you like some more roses, Resli?" she asked the child. "Come in; there are one or two more left to give you."

"Only the ones that are ready to fall," said Resli, holding out her little apron so that to-day she might not let a single leaf fall to the ground.

"Yes, if you like them so, you can have your whole apron full! Come over here."

And the President's wife led the child to a large bed full of roses which were wide open or had already dropped half their leaves. Here she cut off so many that Rose-Resli had her apron quite full.

"May I come again to-morrow?" asked Resli expectantly.

"Certainly you may," replied the lady; "you shall have all these that are wide open, if you take pleasure in them."

Rose-Resli thanked her and ran along much delighted. When she reached the tumble-down cottage where the Sorrow-mother lived, the child remembered her promise to stop there. She stepped into the low, little room where the Sorrow-mother sat at the spinning-wheel. She greeted Resli with great friendliness. Then she went to her window, cut off two red roses

from the little rose-bush growing there, and held them out to the child.

"See, Resli," she said hesitatingly, "I want to ask you if you will take these two rosebuds also with you; perhaps the peasant woman will give you a little more bread for them, even if it is a very small piece. Will you do this, Resli?"

"Yes, yes," replied the child quickly, "and then I will bring the bread right to you. I will be back again soon."

The Cross-way woman was standing in front of her house, by the wall of her vegetable garden, and looking first into one and then into another of the baskets standing on the wall, and in which the beautiful, fragrant rose-leaves were spread out to dry in the sun. Every year the peasant woman made a sweet-smelling rose-water and for this she used a great many rose-leaves, which were not very easy to get.

"That's right," she said with satisfaction as Rose-Resli came and opened her apron, "to-day you shall have a fine piece of bread."

"I have two more," said Resli, holding up high the Sorrow-mother's rosebuds.

"Throw them on the others; they are very small indeed, but perhaps they will have a couple of leaves."

"But I should very much like to have a separate piece of bread for them," said Resli, still holding them fast in her hand.

"I know very well," said the peasant woman, step-

ping into the house, "we were all like that once; now and then at school we swapped a piece of bread for a pear or a couple of prunes; it's so, I know, Resli. There, take the big piece in exchange for the roses in your apron, and here is a little one for the other two. Are you satisfied with this?"

"Yes, yes, really," Resli assured her, thanked her many times, and started to return. She laid the small piece of bread in her apron for the Sorrow-mother, and immediately bit eagerly into the larger piece, for she had had very little to eat at noon, and at night there was nothing at all. So the whole piece of bread had come to an end before Resli reached the little old house. Now she was there and stepped inside and exclaimed: "Here, Sorrow-mother, here is your bread!"

The woman took the child's hand, and pressed it gratefully.

"You don't know how much good you are doing me, Resli," she said. "You see, out in the garden, I have potatoes, which are my only food. But often my stomach can't bear them any longer; bread is too dear for me, and then when I eat almost nothing, I grow so weak, I am no longer able to spin. So I am glad to have your bread, Resli, and thank you heartily for it."

Then Rose-Resli was sorry that she had brought only the small piece of bread to the Sorrow-mother, and had kept the large piece for herself, and she kept thinking in her heart:

"Oh, if I had only eaten the little piece instead of

the big one," and she looked quite cast down. The Sorrow-mother thought she was still hungry, and wanted to give back the little piece of bread to her. But Resli said:

"No, no, I don't want it. I have already had enough; to-morrow I will come again!"

And away she went.

On the following evening she came promptly back again. Once more the President's wife had filled her apron with roses, and again the Sorrow-mother had broken off two rosebuds from the bush and given them to Resli. When she reached the Cross-way woman's, and took the roses out of her apron, Resli said:

"Can I have one piece of bread to-day, but as big as the two together?"

"You see, I guessed right!" replied the peasant woman. "Now you have found out that it is a shame to swap good bread for apples and pears. That is right; only keep it, and to-day it is quite fresh, so you shall have a fine piece; come with me."

The peasant woman went into her kitchen, and cut from the large loaf of bread the biggest piece Resli had ever held in her hand, in all her life. She ran quickly to the Sorrow-mother, and beaming with delight laid the whole piece in her hand; not a morsel had the child taken out of it to-day. Like a weight it had lain on her heart, that she had kept the large piece of bread and brought the small one to the Sorrow-mother. Her eyes shone with delight when the old woman looked in

amazement at her piece of bread. She held it out to the child, saying:

"What is this, Resli? It is surely your bread; come take it, take it! If you will break off just a little piece of it, I will thank you!"

"No, no, I will not take a single crumb of it," said the child. "Good-night, and to-morrow I will come again!"

"I have no more roses, Resli, but I thank you; you don't know how much good you have done me!"

There were tears in the woman's eyes as she called after the child. Resli had noticed this, and for a moment she became quite thoughtful. Then something came to her mind, and Resli was glad in her heart once more, sang and jumped for joy and thought out what she would do the next day.

Soon the President's wife had no more roses, but Resli in her rambles had become acquainted with so many other gardens, that she had no trouble in finding other roses, and she was so quick and light-footed that no place was too far away for her. So every evening she brought her apron full of roses to the peasant woman, and received every time her piece of bread, which was larger rather than smaller, for the peasant woman was very much pleased with what Resli did.

A neighbor who also prepared rose-water, sometimes looked on with envy when she saw Resli shake out her full apron, and said it was no wonder if the Cross-way woman could make better rose-water than she; if she

knew how to procure such beautiful rose-leaves, she would succeed as well.

Resli never ate any more of the bread. The Sorrow-mother had to have it all, although she objected and wanted to share it with the child. From time to time Resli would ask:

"Sorrow-mother, is the bread doing you good?"

Then the poor woman would tell her again and again how much stronger she felt, since she had bread to eat every day; how much more she could spin and earn, so that she would not have to suffer with the cold in the Winter, as usual.

Finally she always said:

"If only I could repay you for what you are doing for me, Resli!"

But Resli's face beamed with such delight that one could see that she already had received the best reward.

Thus it went on until the time of roses was over. One evening, when Resli had run far and wide, and had looked into all the gardens in vain, and at last brought only three half-withered roses to the peasant woman, she said:

"It is all over with the roses, but next year you must bring me your lovely rose-leaves again."

These words made an impression on Resli, which the peasant woman had not expected. She supposed that such a child would receive something here and there from kind people, and not depend so much on her piece of bread. But Resli was thinking of the Sorrow-mother,

and what would happen to her now if she had nothing to eat but her few potatoes. Big tears came into her eyes, as she saw that the roses were all gone.

"No, no, you must not cry, Resli," said the peasant woman sympathetically. "Promise me that next Summer you will again bring me many beautiful roses, and you shall have your piece of bread every day all through the Winter. Will you do it?"

Then her tears were quickly dried, and Resli beamed with delight.

"Yes, indeed, I will; and you shall have all, all the roses, and forget-me-nots, too."

"I don't need them; but the roses—don't forget them! There is your piece of bread, and now it is time for apples, and you must have some of those. There, Resli!" and the peasant woman reached for a big red-cheeked apple, and offered it, together with the piece of bread, to the child.

In highest glee Resli ran off with her treasures, and the peasant woman gazed after her with gratification, for she was fond of Resli and delighted that she was so happy. Besides, she was pleased to have already assured the finest roses for herself the coming Summer. She had particularly noticed how her neighbor was always looking over at her rose-leaves, and she had been a little anxious lest she might entice Resli away for the following Summer, for she must have surely found out that the child brought her fine roses.

The Sorrow-mother, too, had a happy evening.

When Resli, who always brought sunshine into the old woman's lonely room, told her everything she had arranged with the peasant woman, the Sorrow-mother folded her hands and silently thanked the dear Lord for having sent the child, like a good angel, to her, and that now she could look forward to the dreaded Winter with so much less anxiety and concern.

III

ROSE-RESLI'S TROUBLE

Some days later it appeared as if a wonderful change had taken place; as if the Sorrow-mother and Rose-Resli had exchanged natures. The woman was sitting with a calm, happy face by her spinning-wheel. Then Resli stepped in, looking as troubled as if something had happened which would take away her joyousness for all time.

"What is the matter, Resli; what is the matter?" asked the Sorrow-mother in alarm.

"I have a hole in my dress," she cried out in a very fierce tone, "and at school the children all laughed at me; they ran behind me and kept singing louder and louder:

"Rose-Resli, rose-stalk,
Rose-Resli, hole in your frock!"

And at the recollection of the insult which she had had to bear, great tears rolled down Resli's cheeks.

"It was not nice of the children to laugh at you; but perhaps they didn't mean to be so naughty. Come here, Resli, show me the tear. We will mend it," said the Sorrow-mother comfortingly.

Resli stepped up to her, and she did not have to hunt long to find the hole, for it was very large. The kind old woman had the child sit down on a stool, brought her thread and needle, and began the work immediately.

But Resli could not forget her trouble at once and sobbed aloud.

"Be comforted, Resli," said the Sorrow-mother kindly, "such a trouble shall never happen to you again. I will look at your little frock carefully every evening, and mend every little hole at once. And if you catch it and it tears, come quickly to me, and I will make it whole right away. Now can you be happy again?"

"Yes, I can be now," said Resli, quite consoled, and she wiped away her tears, "but I thought every morning I should have another hole, and so they would run after me every day and sing behind me:

"Rose-Resli, rose-stalk—

And so I thought I would never go to school again."

"Yes, indeed, Resli, you must go; that is a law, and a good one, or else you would never learn anything. And you see nobody must run away when trouble comes; we must hold still and bear it, because the dear

Lord always has something to teach us in this way which we should not learn otherwise. For when we are in the midst of trouble and sorrow, we seek help and comfort from Him, and learn to know Him, and then trust comes into our hearts, because we perceive that we have a Father in Heaven who stands by us and hears when we call. Do you pray to Him, too, Resli?"

The child thought for a moment, then she said: "Yes, in school."

"What do you pray in school?"

Resli began, and without taking breath, for fear of losing the sound of the words and not be able to go on, she said as fast as she could:

"How the morning-hour rejoices
Those that wake and praise the Lord:
Thankful hearts and happy voices
With His children well accord.

"Now I don't know any more."

The sound of the words had escaped her, so she knew no more.

"It is a beautiful little verse, but you said it rather too fast, Resli; have you thought what it means?"

"No, I have not," replied Resli.

"You see, it means that when you awake in the morning you should think of the dear Lord the first thing, and rejoice, and thank Him for having protected you all through the night. That is the way to pray in the morning. But do you know a little prayer for the evening?"

"No, I don't know any."

"Then you can only pray from your heart to the dear Lord, and ask Him to forgive you if you have done anything wrong during the day, and ask Him to help you so that you will not do it again. You see, Resli, when we can pray right to the dear Lord, we become quite happy again; if I did not do that always, I should have died from trouble long ago."

"Why?" asked Resli, wondering.

"You see, I have had cause enough. I am so very poor and have hardly enough to live on. Besides, I have a child out in the world, a son, and I know nothing about him; perhaps he is dying in poverty, or is already dead; and if I did not entrust him to the dear Lord every evening, as I did in the first hour of his life, and say, 'He is Thine, help him!' I could never go to sleep on account of my anxiety and grief; but when I have prayed so, comfort and trust come into my heart."

"I will help you to pray for him," said Resli.

"That delights me, child; that delights me; and if you pray for Joseph, it will be good for you, too, that I know, and you will need it if you are able to pray aright."

"Why?" asked Resli again.

"See, my child," began the Sorrow-mother affectionately, but a little anxiously, "your uncle has done wrong, and they say that soon his house and land will be taken away from him. Then you will have to go to

strangers, and that means much work and few kind words. You know nothing about that now, and so it will be well if you know the way to the dear Lord, so that you can tell Him all your troubles and find comfort in Him."

"Then I will come and live with you," said Resli, more pleased than troubled.

"Oh, you dear child, I couldn't take care of you at all—something quite different will happen; but we will tell the dear Lord about it, and He will provide for you. So, now, it is all mended," said the Sorrow-mother, who while she was talking had looked over the child's little frock carefully and mended it.

"If you need anything again, come to me and I will help you."

Resli thanked her politely and ran away with a lightened heart. Now she would never be laughed at in school again, and this assurance delighted Resli so much that she quite forgot about the Sorrow-mother's telling her how, perhaps, she would have to go to strangers soon, and have to do hard work.

Resli did not forget her promise, for when she lay down to sleep she prayed quite loud and from her heart: "Dear Lord, do help Joseph!"

A long, hard Winter followed. The Sorrow-mother had to suffer much from the cold, but not from hunger, as in years before, and so she kept what little health she had.

Rose-Resli was her support and her bread-winner. In the late Autumn she had seen the Sorrow-mother with the greatest effort dragging home a little bundle of fagots. Since then she had gone every day into the forest and found so much wood that the Sorrow-mother was able to make a fire every day in her little room, and cook her bread-soup on the little stove. Every evening after school, in spite of cold, storm and snow, Rose-Resli appeared at the Cross-way woman's, many a time quite blue from the cold and shivering in every limb; although she had been given another dress for the Winter, it was not very warm, and she had only a thin shawl over her neck and shoulders.

So when the peasant woman saw the child shivering and with her teeth chattering so from the cold, she thought she must be suffering from hunger to come running through storm and tempests for the sake of a piece of bread. This made her sorry, and she cut deep into the loaf, so that the piece was even larger than it had ever been in the Summer. But the child carried it all to the Sorrow-mother and firmly refused her entreaties to eat half of it herself. If Resli often went hungry to bed, she was glad that the Sorrow-mother was not in need, and prayed: "Dear Lord, help Joseph!" and went to sleep happy.

Under the Sorrow-mother's care her little frock remained in good condition all Winter long, and the school-children no longer laughed at her or ridiculed her.

IV

SORROW-MOTHER NO LONGER

Summer had come again, and in all the gardens the roses were blooming and giving forth their fragrance. They were in full bloom in all the beds, the young plants bore quite a burden of blossoms, and they nodded down from the flower-pots in all the windows. It was a great rose year. The Summer evening lay brightly over Wildbach and all the meadows and woods round about. The golden evening sunlight shone on Dietrich's little house, and its glittering windows could be seen from far away.

But in front of it two men were standing, with thoughtful faces. One was Uncle Dietrich. He knew that on the morrow house, fields, and goat would all be taken away from him, and in spite of that he would still be deep in debt.

He thrust both hands in his pockets and said, angrily:

"I will go away. I will know nothing more about it."

"But you must not forget that you will be found," said the other. "I will take the child home with me. She really can't work, for you have let her run wild, but I will soon teach her how to use the hoe. After school there are many hours. Then she shall help me."

"She is still young," said the Uncle.

"All the easier to teach," replied the other, and went on his way.

It was the road-mender of Wildbach and he had to dig out the weeds from the roads and clear them off. All the children were afraid of him and kept out of his way, for he was very cross and rough, and never spoke a friendly word.

To this man Rose-Resli was to go early the next morning. He had no children of his own, and it seemed to him quite right to take home such a child as this, to do all kinds of drudgery for him.

The child herself had no idea of what the men had decided. Even now she was wandering cheerfully through the meadows, far beyond Wildbach on her way to the mill. Here there was a garden full of marvellous roses, and the miller's wife had promised Resli a large bunch of them.

Soon after, the child was seen, with her roses in her hand, going back happily by the same road in the golden evening light. She had not gone far when a young man, with quick footsteps, came up behind her. He was holding his straw hat in his hand and let the fresh, cooling air blow over his head.

"You have some beautiful roses," he exclaimed when he had caught up with Resli; "will you give me one to put in my hat?"

Resli nodded in assent and took one out.

"That is kind of you. You have given me the most beautiful one of all," said the stranger, as he placed it with satisfaction in his hat. "How far are you going?"

"I am going home to Wildbach," was the reply.

"Then we are going the same way," said the traveller and walked along with Resli.

"If you are from Wildbach, you must know the people there well, and can tell me something. Does good Frau Steinmann live there still, and is she well?"

"I don't know her," replied Resli. "Nobody there has that name."

"Oh, my God! my God!" groaned the stranger, and was silent. Resli looked at him wonderingly, for from time to time he wiped away a tear and no longer looked happy as before.

After they had walked along together for some time in silence, the stranger began again:

"Do you know the way to the Cross-way woman?"

Resli nodded very emphatically and said:

"I go there every day."

"Then tell me who lives in the old, tumble-down house there at the left on the road, where the crooked willow-tree stands?"

"The Sorrow-mother lives there. I know her well."

"What kind of a name is that? Hasn't she any other?"

"I don't know any other."

"Is she called so because she has had a great deal of sorrow? Do you know?"

"Yes, she has sorrow, because she doesn't know whether Joseph is living in misery or not."

"Oh, my God! my God!" exclaimed the stranger again, and suddenly strode away so that he left Resli

quite a distance behind. But he turned back again, took the child by the hand, and said very kindly:

"Come, let us walk along together and talk a little more."

And he looked so kind and friendly that Resli felt quite trustful.

"Tell me," he continued, "is the Sorrow-mother angry with Joseph?"

"Oh, no! Every night she prays for him, or else she could not go to sleep; and I help her, too."

"Is that so? And what do you pray for him?"

"I pray: 'Dear Lord, do help Joseph!'"

"Perhaps the dear Lord has heard you now, and has helped him."

"Do you believe it?" asked Resli, looking with the greatest interest at the stranger, whose face suddenly lighted up with joy. He said nothing more.

Now they came to the crooked willow-tree, a few steps from the little old house.

"Well, good-bye," said Resli, as she held out her hand to the stranger, evidently somewhat disappointed at his silence. "I am going to see the Sorrow-mother."

"I will go with you," he said quickly. But before they opened the door, it was burst open from the inside and out rushed the Sorrow-mother, embraced the stranger, and exclaimed, again and again:

"Oh, Joseph! Joseph! Is it really you?"

And she wept aloud for joy, and Joseph had to weep with her. And now, when Resli realized that the

stranger was Joseph, who had returned to the Sorrow-mother and looked so well and not so shabby as she had imagined him, she did not know how to contain herself for joy. She hugged the weeping mother and cried exultingly:

"The dear Lord has helped him; the dear Lord has helped him!"

Then all three went into the little house, and the Sorrow-mother looked her son over from head to foot, and her heart overflowed with thankfulness and joy, for he did not look like one who had been sunk into the depths and gone to ruin in poverty, as she had so often, in her chamber at night, imagined him to be. She could not look at him enough, he looked so good to her.

"Come, Mother, come," said the young man, with a happy face, "now let us sit down together and have something to eat, and be merry. Can the child bring us something?"

"Oh, yes, she has done that already," affirmed the mother. "How much good she has brought me before, and now has brought even my son! Where did you find him, Resli?"

"I will tell you all about that, Mother, but let the child go and get some sausages, a bottle of wine, and a big loaf of bread," requested Joseph, laying a large piece of money on the table.

"A whole loaf?" asked Resli, with the greatest astonishment; for she could hardly believe that the Sorrow-mother was to have a whole loaf all at once. But she

flew away in such delight over it that she was back again with all the provisions in an incredibly short space of time.

Then all three sat down at the little table and had a feast, such as was never seen in the room before. But the mother could hardly eat for joy, and kept asking, full of astonishment: "Is this really true, Joseph?" And he quite gayly assured her each time that it was, and gave Resli one slice of bread after another, and sausages, too; and if she said:

"No, no, I really can't eat any more; it is for the Sorrow-mother," then he would reply:

"Just eat and don't worry; Mother shall never again suffer want. She shall have enough bread every day."

"And now," said Joseph, when he had been quite refreshed after his long journey, "now I will tell you, Mother, how things have gone with me. You know, I was to be sent to Australia. But the disgrace of being sent away I would not have, and I couldn't stay here any longer, so I ran away. I went over to England and there I stayed, because I had no money to go any farther. I had hard times there, had to work hard, to earn my living, and thought I should go to destruction. I really believe your prayers saved me, Mother, for every time when things were at their worst, and I was tempted to do wrong, I suddenly heard you as you used to pray, in your room beside me, that the dear Lord might bring all misery upon you, if only He would at last lead me in the right way. Then I saw you before

me and couldn't do anything wrong, to bring you to the grave, and I began to work again.

"I had work in the machine-shops and little by little I improved. In nine years one can learn something, if one wants to, and I wanted to, and now I am a skilled mechanic and shall always find work.

"And now, Mother, you shall have something else. No one shall dare call you 'Sorrow-mother' again. See, Mother, I have brought you my savings. Now tell me how you have fared."

Whereupon Joseph laid his beautiful hard-earned dollars before his mother on the table, and the joy in his heart shone out of his eyes, when he saw his mother's increasing astonishment.

"Oh, that you should earn all that through hard, honest work, Joseph! I don't know how to thank the dear Lord; it is almost too much!" And the good mother had to fold her hands and give praise and thanks again and again. But her son said:

"Tell me now, how it has been with you, Mother."

"There is not much to tell, Joseph," she said; "I have had hard times and much trouble, and they did not call me the Sorrow-mother without good cause. The dear Lord has always helped me through. But in these last years I have been so very poor and lost my strength, so I thought I should not live through another Winter.

"Then like an angel from Heaven came the child Rose-Resli, and she gave me back my strength. The whole Winter through and until now she has supported

me, and I know she has often brought me her bread and gone hungry herself. And now I have only one cause for complaint, Joseph. Resli lives with her uncle Dietrich, and to-morrow he loses his house and home; the child has to go to strangers, and who knows how it will be with her."

"What? The child who has taken care of you, Mother?" interrupted Joseph, indignantly. "We have enough for the child too, no one needs to give us anything for her. I will go to Dietrich. Rose-Resli shall not leave us again!"

And he shot out of the door and hurried away.

Then Resli jumped from her stool, fell on the old woman's neck, and cried out in her delight, again and again:

"Sorrow-mother! Sorrow-mother! Now I can live with you! Now I shall not have to go away again!"

And the mother held the child fast and said:

"Oh, Resli, how much we have to be thankful for! If we thank the dear Lord as long as we live it will not be enough. Never forget that in all your life! Now the last trouble is taken away from my heart, and you must not call me Sorrow-mother any more, for I am not so any longer, but I will be a mother to you."

When the Uncle Dietrich learned from Joseph what he desired, he was glad, for secretly he was fond of Resli. He was unwilling to give her to the cross road-mender, but he didn't know at the time of any other

way, for he had to leave early the next morning. So he said to Joseph:

"Take the child right away. Don't send her back to sleep, but take her little bed at once." He thought the matter would be safer in this way, for if the road-mender came early in the morning he could not take Resli with him.

Joseph was much pleased and pressed another piece of money into Dietrich's hand, for he had heard that the uncle had never been unkind to Resli.

So he took the little bed and its scanty contents on his shoulder and came home quite happy with it.

It was placed in the little chamber next the mother's bed, and Resli was unspeakably happy because now she could remain day and night with her.

Joseph found his sleeping-place just as he had left it nine years before. His mother had thought every day during this time:

"Perhaps he will come back, and then he must still find a home."

And Joseph was so happy to have found his home again, that he would not have left it for any money. He found the work that he wanted, for he was a skilled, expert workman.

Every morning, when he went to work, Resli placed a rose in his hat. This pleased Joseph very much, and made him feel happy at his work. He always had a rose, even when there were no more to be seen anywhere about, for Resli knew every place where a last rose

could be blooming, and she obtained the rose from the one to whom it belonged.

As soon as the story became known, how Resli had supported the Sorrow-mother for a whole year long almost alone, everybody loved her even much more than before, and wherever she went she received roses from the gardens, whether they were the first or the last.

So the three happy people lived together in the smallest house in Wildbach, and Rose-Resli will be her name all her life long.

The Children's Carol

I

BASTI AND FRÄNZELI LEARN A SONG

IN Bürgeln, the little village above Altorf, the green meadows with their fragrant grass and gay flowers are wonderful to look at and to wander through in summertime. Shady nut-trees stand round about and the foaming Schächen brook rushes past them down through the meadows, and makes wild leaps whenever a stone lies in its way.

At the end of the little village, where there is an old tower overgrown with ivy, a footpath follows the brook farther along. Here stands an extremely large, ancient nut-tree, and under its cool shade travellers enjoy lying down and looking from beneath the shady seat up to the high cliffs, which rise above into the blue sky. A few steps away from the old tree a wooden foot-bridge crosses the roaring brook half-way up the mountain, where the path climbs steeply. There stands a little hut with a small shed beside it, and higher up another and still another and then as if thrown down on the mountain, the smallest of all, with such a low door that no person could enter it without bowing his head. The goat-shed behind it is also so small that only the leanest goat can go in and nothing else.

The little hut has only two rooms, a living-room and tiny bedroom next it, and opposite the door of the living-room is a space where the little fireplace stands. In Summer the house-door remains open all day and makes the small room light; otherwise it is very dark.

The haymaker Joseph used to live in the little hut, but he has been dead for four years, and now his wife and two children still live there: quiet, industrious Afra with little Basti, a strong, healthy boy and the still smaller Fränzeli, a delicate little girl with bright curls.

Joseph and Afra had lived very quietly and happily and only left their home when they went to church together. Usually Afra stayed in the house attending to her tasks, but Joseph went away in the morning to his work and came back at night.

When a little boy was sent to them, they looked in the almanac and as they saw that it was Saint Sebastian's day they gave the child his name. Then when the little girl was born on Saint Francis' day, they named her Francisca, which after the custom of the country became Fränzeli.

The children were always Afra's best possession and since she lost her husband, her great comfort and her only joy on earth. She kept her children so clean and neat that no one would have believed that they came from the meanest little hut and belonged to one of the poorest women in the whole region.

Every morning she washed them with all care and combed Fränzeli's light blond curly hair, so that she

would not look unkempt, and every Sunday morning one of the two little shirts which each child owned was washed, and over these was put Fränzeli's best frock, and Basti's trousers, made from his father's. Usually both of them wore nothing else, for shoes and stockings never were on their feet all Summer long. In Winter their mother had something warm in readiness for them, but really not much. It was not necessary, for the children then almost never went out of the house at all. For this and all the necessary work that had to be done, Afra had to be busy early and late and could take little rest for herself. But nothing was too much for her. If she only had her children with her and both looked up at her with their merry eyes, she at once forgot all the weariness from which she longed to be free, and she would not have exchanged her children for any luxury in the world.

Moreover, every one who saw the children was pleased with them. When they came down the mountain, hand in hand—for Basti always held Fränzeli firmly by the hand as if to protect her—one neighbor who saw them pass by would say to another:

"I have often wondered how Afra manages with her children. Since mine came into the world they have never looked so attractive as these two."

"I was just going to say the same," the other usually replied; "I will ask my wife how it happens."

The women, however, were not pleased to hear this, and said there was nothing to be done about it, some

children were like that and others different, and Afra must not think that beautiful children were of the greatest importance. But Afra did not think so by any means. She only desired, since the dear Lord had given her such lovely children, not to disfigure them with dirt.

When one of the neighbors said to her:

"Afra, your children delight me. The boy is like a strawberry and Fränzeli, with her delicate little checks and golden curls, is like an altar-image," she would reply:

"If the dear Lord will only keep them well and make them good! I pray for this every day." And this she really did.

Almost five years had now passed since she had lost her husband. Basti had been six years old some time before, and Fränzeli five, but she was so delicately and slenderly built that she looked nearly two years younger than sturdy Basti with his strong limbs.

It was a cold Autumn, and Winter set in early and promised to be very hard. Already in October there was heavy snow and it did not go away. In November Afra's little hut stood so deep in it that one could hardly step out of it. Basti and Fränzeli sat in their corner by the stove and never went outdoors any more. Their mother had to go out now and then, but did so only when she no longer had a crumb of bread in the house.

It was almost impossible to go down the mountain, the snow lay so deep, and no one made a path except

sometimes one single man, who lived still higher up, and in whose footsteps she tried to walk. But if fresh snow had fallen she had to make her way herself and break out a path. When she returned home from these trips she was often so tired she had to muster all her strength not to drop. And yet there was no longer so much to do that she could not take a little rest. But it was not weariness which often made her silent and give out so many heavy sighs, when she finally sat down in the evening to mend the children's clothes. Heavy cares oppressed her and grew every day. Often she did not know how she could get a bit of bread, she so seldom had any work, and if she had no knitting or spinning to do for a whole week, she could buy none, and the little milk from the thin goat was all the food she had for the three of them.

So Afra often for hours at a time in the night was puzzled to know what she could do to earn something, if ever so little, for three long Winter months still lay before her. Usually when she put the children to bed and sat down beside them with her mending, she sang a song to them which lulled them to sleep. Now she sat silently and no song would rise from her heavy heart.

She was sitting thus one evening, silent and full of trouble, and outside the wind howled and shook the little hut as if it would overturn it. Fränzeli had already fallen asleep, for if she saw her mother sitting beside her she was not disturbed even when the wind howled and whistled so cruelly. But Basti's eyes were still wide

open and looked at his mother while she mended. Suddenly he said:

"But, Mother, why don't you ever sing any more?"

"Oh dear," she sighed, "I can't sing any longer."

"Don't you know the song any more? Wait. I will show you how it goes," and Basti sat right up in his bed and began to sing:

Night descends from darkening skies
Fields and woods caressing.
Lord, to Thee our prayers arise,
Give us now Thy blessing.

With a steady, clear voice Basti had sung the verse through quite correctly, for he had heard it so many evenings from his mother, and she was quite surprised. Suddenly a thought came into her head.

"The dear Lord has sent it to me," she said, and looked with delight at her boy. "Basti, you can help me to earn something, so that I can have bread again for you and Fränzeli. Would you like to do it?"

"Yes, yes, I should!—This very minute?" asked Basti in the greatest haste, and immediately jumped out of bed.

"No, no, get into bed again. Don't you see how cold you are?" and his mother quickly put the little one back under the covers.

"But to-morrow I will teach you a song and on New Year's day you can sing it to the people. It will not

be much longer until then and they will give you bread and perhaps nuts."

Basti became so excited at the prospect of this reward and important assistance, that he could not go to sleep and asked again and again:

"Mother, is it morning yet?" but at last sleep mastered him and closed his eyes.

In the morning he woke with the same thoughts with which he had gone to sleep, but he had to have patience, for his mother said:

"We can't sing until evening for I have too much to do to-day."

So Basti whiled away the time by telling Fränzeli what his mother was going to teach him and that he would then be able to bring home bread and perhaps nuts too.

Fränzeli listened quite intently and she, too, could hardly wait until the evening.

When it had grown dark and their mother had finished all her tasks, she lighted the little lamp, seated herself at the table and drew Fränzeli on one side of her and Basti on the other. Then she began to work on the warm stockings which had to be knitted for Basti to wear on the expedition, and said:

"Listen to me very attentively, Basti. I will sing the first verse a few times, then we will try to see if you know it," and the mother began to sing. It was not long before Basti was singing with her, and suddenly Fränzeli began to join in quite eagerly. When

the mother heard her, she nodded to her kindly, and when the verse came to an end she said:

"That is right, Fränzeli, perhaps you will learn it too."

When she had sung the verse several times together with them, their mother said:

"Now will you try it, Basti? Fränzeli will help a little too, won't you, Fränzeli?"

She nodded gladly and Basti began his song with a steady voice. But how astonished their mother was when Fränzeli joined in with her silver, clear little voice, which she had never heard like this before, and when Basti sometimes failed to follow the melody, the little girl sang on like a bird that sings his melody without any difficulty and quite correctly to the end. Her mother was highly delighted. She had never thought that little Fränzeli would be able to help, and it sounded so sweetly when the two sang together, that she wanted to listen to them all the time. She had accomplished so much more than she had expected.

Every evening now they sang with all diligence and when the week was at an end the children could sing the whole song with all four verses without hesitation, and that delighted them so much that when they came to the end they always wanted to sing it over again from the beginning and could not have enough of it. Their mother was very happy about it, for now she could be sure that the children would not break down even if she was not with them.

December had come and the end of the year was near. One evening shortly before this, the mother sat down with the children once more to see if they were quite sure of their song and began the tune, but they were always ahead of their mother, they were so sure and so eager, and their mother had to hurry her time a little throughout to keep with them. Without hesitation they sang all four verses of their New Year's song. These were the words:

The Old Year now has taken flight,
The New Year is beginning.
We pray it bring you all delight
In working and in winning.

Now come the icy Winter days,
The ground is hard and frozen.
For the dear Lord directs your ways
As His wise Love has chosen.

The hungry birds may search the ground
For seeds the trees deny them.
And even children wander round
For crusts to satisfy them.

But may the New Year bring you all
Great joy and richest treasure,
And if the Lord your friend you call
He'll help you in full measure.

II

UNEXPECTED NEW YEAR'S SINGERS

New Year's morning had come. The mother went to church very early, for she never missed that. Then she began to wrap the expectant children in all the warm things which they had. To be sure they were not much, but she had knitted a pair of warm stockings also for Fränzeli, who would surely need them to-day. Finally she took an old shawl, which she herself usually wore, wrapped it round and round Fränzeli, took her in her arms and said:

"There, now we can go."

Basti went ahead and worked his way bravely through the deep snow down to the path along by the Schächen brook. Here he could walk beside his mother and had so many questions to ask about where they were now and what was going to happen that the time passed very quickly and before he knew it the long way lay behind him.

They had now reached the first houses of Altorf. The mother noticed at once that a crowd of children were on their way to sing their New Year's songs. They were coming in and out of all the houses. Afra went without delay to the large hotel, standing not far from the church by the old tower. Here it was quite still. The mother placed Fränzeli on the ground, unwrapped her and then sent the children into the big

house, telling them to begin their song as soon as they entered. She herself withdrew a little way behind the tower, so that she could see the children when they came out again.

Basti, holding Fränzeli firmly by the hand, went into the house and immediately began to sing his song in a clear voice and Fränzeli joined him quite melodiously. Then the door of the hotel opened, the people called the children inside, praised them for their singing, and into the basket which the mother had hung on Basti's arm came from here and there many pieces of bread, and now and then a bit of money, and the lady of the house laid in a big handful of nuts and said:

"On New Year's day you must have something besides bread!"

Then Basti thanked her in quite a loud voice and Fränzeli very softly, and the children, full of joy at their gifts, ran out to their mother. Then they went on to another house, but there were other children singing there and others coming after, so that often a whole crowd was standing together in the same house. If they all attempted to sing together the woman or her husband would come out and say they would rather give each a piece of bread than have such a noise. Often there were some of them who did not receive any gift and had to go empty-handed away. More than once, when so many were standing in front of a door, the woman would call Fränzeli to her and say kindly:

"Come, little one, you are almost frozen, you must

have something, but then go home, you are shivering like a little leaf."

After the children had sung in five or six houses, and were coming out of another, their mother saw that they could not go on any longer. It was bitter cold, and she herself was almost frozen, and delicate Fränzeli was trembling in every limb, so that she could no longer sing. Basti also was completely blue, and had such stiff hands he could not grasp the basket, but had to hold it out on his arm when he was about to be given something.

Then the mother quickly wrapped Fränzeli around and took her in her arms.

" And you, Basti," she said, " run along fast, so as to get warm again."

Then they ran without stopping, until they were at home in their little hut, and all three sat down around the stove close together, until their hands and feet were warm again. Then Basti brought out the basket, as they had to see everything that was in it.

After their great exertion the children received each a fine piece of bread and their nuts besides, and so they celebrated together a happy New Year's evening. The mother too was happy and thankful. Although she had not received any lasting help, yet she had bread enough for many days, and here and there a penny had been thrown into the basket and she could make good use of these.

Really hard days full of trouble followed, and the

mother often had to struggle with want and cold. But finally the long Winter came to an end, the warm sun appeared again, the children could once more sit in front of the little hut and no longer had to shiver with cold. The goat was again led out, could eat the sweet, young grass and gave a little more milk.

The mother was relieved of a great burden, as she no longer had to hunt everywhere for wood to warm the frail little house sufficiently, for now the sun shone warm in the windows and lovely mild air streamed in. But she had over-exerted herself so greatly all through the Winter and taken so little food that she had come to the end of her strength and even the warm Spring sunshine could not bring it back again. Still she did not lessen her work and her ceaseless activity from early until late, and if oftentimes she thought she would have to succumb from weariness and weakness, a great, inward anguish always urged her on anew, for she foresaw very well that if she could no longer support herself and her children, they would be taken from her by the overseers of the poor and provided for somewhere else, so that she could earn her bread at service. And the thought was so terrible to her, that she preferred to spend her last bit of strength.

Now the long, hot Summer days had come. From the cloudless sky the sun sent fiery heat down on the steep mountain-side, on which the late hay lay everywhere, drying or already gathered into stacks. Afra with her children had climbed up where high among the

rocks she owned a tiny bit of land, from which every year she obtained the winter fodder for her goat. She had bound together the hay that she had made the day before, in order to carry home the warm, dry load on her head. Fränzeli clung fast to her mother's skirt, as she always did, when she had no free hand, but Basti had to carry a little load of hay too.

When they reached home the mother immediately brought out the milk, for they had eaten nothing since their scanty breakfast except a piece of bread, which they had taken with them, and now it was five o'clock in the evening. When the mother took the rest of the bread with the milk out of the cupboard she saw for the first time how very little there was. Before she finished knitting the stockings ordered, she would have no money to buy bread and yesterday and to-day she had not been able to knit on account of the work with the hay. The mother gave half of the small piece of bread to Fränzeli, the other to Basti and said:

"I know quite well that you are very hungry, but you see that I can't give you any more for there is no more there. But this evening I will knit fast, then to-morrow I can give you a bigger piece."

Basti took his little piece gladly, but he did not take a bite of it, for he saw that his mother, after pouring milk into the bowls, which she gave to the children, sat down and laid her head in her hands. Basti watched her intently.

"Where is your bread, Mother?" he asked finally.

" I haven't any, Basti, but I am not hungry any more. I don't need any," replied the mother. Then Fränzeli hurried to her and quickly put a little crumb which she had left into her mother's mouth, and Basti held out his piece to her and said pitifully:

" If you haven't any, you must be hungry, so we will share with you."

But his mother gave it back to him. " No, no, Basti, eat it gladly. You see I can't eat anything. I don't feel quite well. If I can go to the doctor to-morrow down in Altorf, he will give me something, for I can't go on like this."

The last words she spoke in a low voice to herself, and suddenly sank back with closed eyes. She had fainted from weakness and exhaustion.

Basti looked at his mother for a while, then he said softly to Fränzeli:

" Come. I know what I am going to do, but you must be very quiet, so as not to wake Mother. You see she wants to sleep a little while."

Whereupon he seized Fränzeli's hand firmly, led her to the door, and she couldn't help being anything but quiet, for she had neither stockings nor shoes on her little feet, nor had Basti either. So they came very softly out through the open door and went together down the mountain. When they had left the steep mountain footpath behind them, and continued their way along by the roaring water, Basti pushed Fränzeli away from the brook to the other side of the path and

quite a good piece into the meadow and said authoritatively:

"You see, Fränzeli, you must never, never, go on the other side, or you might fall into the brook. Mother said so, and little children like you would be drowned right away."

Fränzeli understood and willingly allowed herself to be led through the meadow. Then Basti went on to say:

"See, Fränzeli, now we are going into the houses in Altorf to sing our song again; then we shall be given bread and perhaps nuts too. Then we will take everything to Mother, you know, because she couldn't get anything more to eat to-day. But can you still sing the song?"

Fränzeli was delighted at this prospect and went on with new eagerness through the meadow and then on the stony street, in spite of her bare little feet. She said she could still sing the song, and Basti began to try it once more. So the children sang their New Year's song loudly. They knew it still very well, sang it from the beginning through and in this way came to Altorf before they knew it, although Fränzeli's tender feet had become quite red from the exertion. When they had reached the first houses of the place they stopped singing and Basti said:

"I know very well which house to begin with, but not here."

He led Fränzeli, who was now rather tired, to the big hotel, "The Golden Eagle," where their mother had

sent them in first on New Year's day. But now it looked quite different from then. The evening sun threw golden beams on the open space in front of the door, and quite a noise came from there. A whole crowd of strangers had arrived, noisy young men in handsome bright-colored caps who, as soon as they came, had taken the large table from the dining-room outside to the open square, and were now sitting around it, eating and drinking in great merriment, for they had had a long walk to-day and were now enjoying themselves. When Basti saw so many people at the table, and Fränzeli stood still from fright, he thought it better to sing to the men at a safe distance, so he began with all his might, that they might hear it even in the midst of the noise they were making.

"Be still," suddenly thundered the huge voice of a big powerful man, who was sitting at the head of the table. "Be still, I say. I hear singing; we are going to have music at our supper table."

The men all looked around, and when they saw the children, who had placed themselves a little behind the old tower, they all beckoned to them, and a crowd of voices called together:

"Come here!" "Come nearer!" "Come right here!"

The children had stopped singing, and Basti came nearer very willingly. But he had to urge Fränzeli a little, for she was very much frightened.

Then the big blond man with the thick beard held out

his long arm, drew Basti nearer to the table and they all cried:

"Now let them sing, Barbarossa."

"There, now sing your song," he commanded, "only don't be afraid."

Basti began in a loud voice, and Fränzeli's small one was added like a soft, silver bell, and without hesitating they sang:

The old year now has taken flight
The New Year is beginning,
We pray it bring you all delight
In working and in winning.

"Mercy! We are on the other side of the globe. They are celebrating New Year's here!" exclaimed Barbarossa loudly, and such a shouting and laughing followed that they made a terrible noise.

"Listen and don't make such a noise," cried the tall man with black curly hair, sitting next Barbarossa. "Look at the little madonna; she is trembling from fright."

Then they were really quiet and all looked at Fränzeli, who was clinging anxiously to Basti.

"Maximilian, take the little girl!" commanded Barbarossa, "and then let them sing again!"

Maximilian took Fränzeli kindly by the hand and said: "Come to me, little girl, then no one can hurt you."

Fränzeli held his firm hand trustfully, and as soon as it was quiet, Basti's voice continued singing:

Now come the icy winter days,
The ground is hard and frozen.
For the dear Lord directs your ways
As His wise Love has chosen.

"He has really protected me from cold to-day," exclaimed Barbarossa, who was all aglow, eyes, cheeks and beard.

Noise and loud laughter broke forth again, but many of them cried out: "Again!" "Again!" "Once more!" The children sang:

The hungry birds may search the ground
For seeds the trees deny them,
And even children wander round
For crusts to satisfy them.

"That they must have, they must have that," they all cried from all sides, and a crowd of plates piled with good things was pushed towards the children. But Basti did not allow himself to be enticed away; with a steady voice he went on singing, and Fränzeli helped him to the end:

But may the New Year bring you all
Great joy and richest treasure,
And if the Lord your friend you call
He'll help you in full measure.

Then a tremendous shouting broke forth, and all cried together:

"That is a beautiful wish! That will bring us good luck on our journey!"

But Barbarossa now drew Basti to him and placed before him a plate filled with fine things such as he had never seen in all his life before. On the edge lay a large piece of snow-white bread, and Barbarossa said encouragingly:

"There, my son, now go bravely to work and don't stop until you have finished everything."

And all the other plates heaped high were pressed towards him, and from all sides they cried: "Take this too! He shall have this one too!"

Basti stood and gazed at all the luxuries, his eyes shining with delight, and growing bigger and bigger with expectation, but he did not move. Fränzeli's protector, whose hand she still held fast, had placed a plate just as abundantly filled before her and urged her to help herself. Fränzeli, who had grown very hungry during the long walk, immediately took a fine morsel on her fork, and was going to put it in her mouth, but she quickly glanced at Basti and when she saw that he was not eating a single mouthful she hastily laid her piece back again on the plate.

"What is the matter with you? Why don't you begin to eat, my brave son of William Tell? What is your real name?" asked Barbarossa.

"My name is Basti," was the reply.

"Good, Basti, my son, what are you thinking about so deeply that makes you open your eyes so wide and takes away your appetite?"

"If I only had a bag!" he burst forth.

" A bag? And what for? "

" I would put everything into it and take it to Mother. She has no bread at all to-day."

Then the men became quite sympathetic and many of them cried out that they must get him a bag and he must do as he wished. Others asked where his mother lived, if she was quite near. When Basti answered that she lived in Bürgeln up on the mountain, they all exclaimed in surprise and Barbarossa said:

" If you have come down from up there, you really must be hungry—is it not so, Basti? "

" Yes, and besides that we have had only a very little bread all day," he stated, " but to-morrow, perhaps, Mother can finish the stockings, then we shall have more."

Then each of the men wanted to do something, one to get a bag, others a porter, but Barbarossa called out above all the others:

" Now first of all, I want to see that these two children have enough to eat, and then the rest will come later. Now listen, Basti! What is here on your plate is yours; eat that and when you have finished your mother shall have all the rest."

" Everything? " asked Basti, and looked with shining eyes at all the well-filled plates.

" Everything! " stated Barbarossa. " Can you begin now? " Then Basti seized his fork and ate with such a gratifying appetite that Barbarossa looked on with great satisfaction, and Maximilian sympathized when

Fränzeli at last ventured to appease her great hunger. The proceeding was interrupted now and then by a short question and answer.

"Did your mother send you here to sing the song?" asked Barbarossa.

"No, she went to sleep, because she had no bread to eat and was tired. She wanted to go to the doctor, too, because he would give her some medicine," explained Basti, "and so I came with Fränzeli, so that Mother could have some bread, when she woke, because we got bread the first time when we sang here."

Then the men understood how it had happened, that the children had sung their New Year's song to them, and Barbarossa said:

"I propose that we all together accompany our singers up to Bürgeln. Besides to-morrow we must look for the place where the wild waters of the Schächen brook swallowed up the brave Tell. To-day let us make a moonlight party and bring our runaway friends back to their mother."

"And you, as the kind doctor, can give her a good prescription," added Maximilian.

But when he saw that all his friends had left their seats, swinging their sticks, and were ready to be up and away he called to them quite indignantly:

"Really, what are you thinking about? Can this little delicate creature keep step with you? Moreover shall she have to travel over this long way for the second time on her two tiny little feet? First, let the land-

lord harness his horse, then the little girl can sit in the carriage with the provision basket, and then we will start along."

"Your idea is good," remarked Barbarossa, looking at the huge basket, which the landlady brought out instead of a bag, for when she understood what the men wanted of her, she had told them that all the different kinds of food could not be thrown together into a bag, and had therefore brought out a huge big basket and packed everything into it nicely.

"This is best," continued Barbarossa, turning to Maximilian. "You stay and sit with your little girl and the provision basket in the carriage; we will go ahead and Basti shall be our guide."

This was decided upon, but when the procession was about to start, Barbarossa stopped them again and said earnestly:

"No one knows what dangers and hardships we may encounter on this nightly expedition, so let each one follow my example and put a bottle of strengthening wine in his pocket."

Whereupon he went into the house to procure one for himself and all the others followed noisily after, for the proposal had met with complete approval.

Finally they were all ready again and could start on their journey.

Big Barbarossa, with little Basti at his side, walked at the head of the procession. Soon Maximilian lifted the little girl into the open carriage, seated himself be-

side her, next the full-packed basket, and then started away in the beautiful evening light which still flamed golden from the sunset.

Fränzeli looked extraordinarily well pleased to be riding there in a carriage, with her friendly protector by her side. Her confidence in him had become so great that she talked with him continually and told him how she lived at home with her mother, and Basti and the goat, and what they all did.

III

ONE SURPRISE AFTER ANOTHER

Meanwhile the mother had half awakened several times but did not have the strength to recover herself entirely, and each time fell back again and lay for several hours in a sort of stupor. Finally she awoke. The twilight had already come on. She could not see her children, but she was so tired that she remained sitting. "Basti!" she called after some time, as everything was so still around her. "Fränzeli, where are you?"

She received no answer. Then her anxiety suddenly gave her strength. She rose quickly, went to the house door, but nobody was there—she went to the goat and it was all alone—then around the hut, calling the names of the children again and again—all was still. Only from below roared the wild raging Schächen brook. A

frightful anguish came over the mother and she could hardly keep on her feet. She folded her hands and fervently besought the dear Lord to spare her from the worst. Then she ran along the footpath and was going down the mountain when she saw a whole procession of people coming up from below. All were talking loudly and eagerly together, and it seemed exactly as if their raised walking sticks were pointing to her hut.

"Oh, merciful goodness!" she said in the greatest alarm. "Can it be a message for me?" She could not take another step farther, but stood as if paralyzed.

"Mother! Mother!" she suddenly heard called from below, "we are coming now, and you must see what we are bringing! And the men are all coming with us, and Fränzeli is coming in a carriage with a horse."

Now Basti rushed ahead of all the others, and kept calling out and breathlessly telling everything that had happened, for he could not wait for his mother to learn all. And when he had finally reached the top and rushed to his mother, she pressed the boy to her and thanked God with all her heart, and the delight gave her new life.

But her astonishment and surprise grew with every moment for behind her Basti came a whole crowd of men, and they all greeted her in the most friendly way, like old acquaintances. Two of them were carrying on two walking sticks, which rested on their shoulders, a huge basket, and finally came a man holding Fränzeli by the hand, and the child usually so shy was so trustful

with him that she did not once let go his hand when she saw her mother, but pulled him along towards her.

Good Afra did not know when she should begin to thank them, for from Basti's talk she quickly grasped that the men had shown every sort of kindness to the children, and the well-filled basket showed it also. She turned at once to Barbarossa. Because he was the largest of them all, she took him for a sort of leader and thanked him so heartily that he was much moved.

Then it suddenly came to his mind that he ought to give her some medical advice, and proposed to her to step inside the hut with him and to tell him what was the matter with her. She was very much delighted at this and indoors explained to him that she really had no pain, but could hardly stand and walk from weakness and lack of strength. He asked her then what she was eating and drinking and she told him everything. Then Barbarossa stepped out in front of the hut and called in a loud voice:

"Bring all the bottles here!" He himself ran hurriedly to and fro to collect them and finally the table was completely covered with bottles and as many were even standing on the floor, and to Afra, who was speechless with amazement, he said:

"You see, my good woman, we have brought the medicine with us. Take a good glassful every day then you will be better."

"Oh, my dear sir," Afra was at last able to bring out, "I have often thought a little drop of wine would

do me good, if I could only get some, but so much! so much!"

"My worthy woman," replied Barbarossa, "if a little drop would do you good, several drops will do you more good, and now fare you well and your children, too!"

Whereupon he reached his hand to Afra, and she followed him out and took leave of all the men, but she could not finish thanking them. Fränzeli, too, now thanked her protector as well as she could and begged him to come again soon. Basti ran from one to another with his thanks and hurried to the outermost point of the cliff and screamed with all his might as long as he could see anything of the men:

"God bless you, Barbarossa! God bless you, Maximilian!" for he had learned their names well.

When the children were sitting with their mother inside the hut, they had so much to tell her, how everything had happened, how they had quickly gone away to get her a little bread by singing while she was asleep, and how then one thing after another had occurred, until they had been brought home with the horse and carriage. Fränzeli could hardly find words to describe the grandeur she had felt in driving home in the wagon.

Now when the big basket was unpacked and out of each package rolled new and wonderful things to eat, and finally at the bottom came into sight three whole loaves of white bread, which the men had placed there especially, then Basti was so overcome with delight that

he made the highest leaps around the room and had to shout aloud again and again:

"God bless you, Maximilian! God bless you, Barbarossa!"

But the mother said over and over:

"The dear Lord put this into the young men's hearts. We will pray for them every day, my children, and never forget them."

Meanwhile the students were making their way in great hilarity down towards Altorf. Only Maximilian was quite silent for a while, and then he suddenly broke out with the words:

"It really is not right! No, it is not right. We have only rescued the poor woman and children from dying of hunger, and gone no further. What will they do in the Winter without warm clothes, without food, without everything? That must not be. We must take up a collection right away, to-day, and the hotel-keeper can hand over the proceeds."

"Maximilian," then said Barbarossa, "your intention is good, but the proposal is impractical. You forget that we are travelling, that we are far from home and will need much more to get there. What will be left to collect? I will make another proposal. Let us form a society, the Bastiania, yearly dues four marks. All our mothers and sisters shall be named honorary members, who will supply the necessary blouses and dresses for Basti and the little girl. As soon as we reach home the honorary members will be called to assist

in the work of love, and the first contribution from the Bastiania will be sent off."

This proposition found great approval. In the gayest spirits the students entered Altorf again, found their table still standing outside, seated themselves once more at it, and here in the bright moonlight the Bastiania society was founded and started.

How amazed Afra was, when some weeks later the postman brought up such a mighty big package to her, that he had to push it through the door with all his strength. Then he threw it on the floor and said, knitting his brows:

" I am wondering, Afra, what acquaintances you have so far away in Germany. The postmaster, too, couldn't guess who you could know so far away."

" Perhaps you haven't come to the right place with the package," replied Afra.

" You can read it," replied the postman, and went on his way.

Sure enough, Afra's name and her residence were plainly marked on it. She loosened the firmly sewed corner and the whole fastening became gradually undone. The children looked with great excitement at the mysterious object. Suddenly it all fell apart and out rolled blouses and frocks and shawls, shoes and stockings to their great astonishment, and in the midst fell out a heavy roll, in which were many, many silver pieces. The mother clapped her hands together and kept exclaiming:

"But where did they come from? Where did such a blessing come from?"

Then Fränzeli brought her a sheet of paper, which had fallen out of the things. On it stood the words:

And if the Lord your friend you call
He'll help you in full measure.

Then Basti immediately cried out: "That is in the song; it has come from the men!"

Yes, it must be so. Now it was clear to the mother too, that the rich gift could have come from no one else but their benefactors. What inexpressible gratitude now filled her heart, when she suddenly became entirely free from the great anxiety, lest she should be separated from her children. Now she had such abundant supplies she could live without care the coming Winter, and besides the strengthening wine would make her quite strong and well again.

How astonished Afra was, when the next year a similar package followed, and every year following, for the Bastiania continued as a solid alliance and the honorary members thought, with each frock and jacket their children outgrew, of the little New Year's singers, who had been pictured in such glowing colors to them by their sons and brothers, on their return from their trip to Switzerland.

Afra had hung up in her room, as a continual remembrance, the sheet of paper which the men had

placed in their package, and on which stood the words:

And if the Lord your friend you call
He'll help you in full measure.

Little Miss Grasshopper

I

BEFORE THE JOURNEY

ONE sunny July morning Herr Feland was sitting in his easy chair, and holding such a large newspaper in front of him that nothing at all could be seen of his face.

Opposite him sat his wife in a white morning cap. From time to time she poured a little water from the singing kettle on the fragrant coffee in the coffee-pot. Breakfast was about to be served.

Then the door opened and two little girls entered, followed by a young lady, who regarded with some anxiety the lively way in which little Rita ran bounding through the room in order finally to spring with one big leap on her Papa's knee. By her skill in jumping it was plain to see that it was not the first time she had accomplished this. Rita now looked triumphantly around as if to say: "Now I am once more seated in my strong castle where no harm can reach me!"

Then she put her little curly head under the big newspaper and said roguishly:

"Oh, Papa, now I have found you! When are we going to the Gemmi?"

Papa laid aside his paper, kissed his little girl and said:

"First, good-morning, little Grasshopper; we will see about planning for the trip later."

On account of her nimble jumping her Papa called her little Grasshopper. When Rita found the big paper was no longer between her and her Papa she threw her arms around his neck and said, "Good-morning," with great affection. Meanwhile, her sister Ella was standing perfectly still beside her Papa's chair, waiting for his morning greeting. Then he kissed his older little daughter also, and she sat down quietly at the table.

"Now please go too and sit where you belong!" said Papa to Rita, who had made no move to leave her high seat.

"I am going right away, Papa," said Rita assuringly, but first she straightened herself up in her castle, and said:

"I was only waiting for you to say when we are going to the Gemmi."

"As soon as Mother has packed," replied her Papa.

Then Rita jumped down and ran to her Mother.

"Oh, Mamma, let us pack to-day! Please, please, right away," begged Rita coaxingly. "I will help you, and Ella can help you too, and Fräulein Hohlweg, and so we can go away to-morrow and then ——"

"Now we will drink our milk and sit very quietly a while at the table, dear child," replied her Mother with firm decision, and Rita, who saw that there could be no

further answer to her question, sat down in her place between her father and mother, and breakfast began.

Every morning for a long time had begun in Herr Feland's house with pressing question about the trip to the Gemmi, and hardly any other thought entered little Rita's mind.

The plan for this journey had been impressed upon little Rita's imagination in the following way, and had fastened itself firmly there.

The Summer before, her father and mother had made a trip to Switzerland. On the Gemmi Pass, leading from Wallis across to the canton of Berne, they had been so especially delighted that they decided to go there again the following Summer, to take the children and Miss Hohlweg with them and remain there for some time. On their journey the parents had made the acquaintance of the guide Kaspar, and had told him of their intention and desire to hire a house in the vicinity and settle his family there instead of living in a hotel. Then Kaspar had proposed to let them occupy his own cottage, which stood not far from the Gemmi Pass on a green slope near the footpath. He could perfectly well give up his little house at just this time because he himself was always away travelling with strangers, his two boys were taking care of the big flocks in the mountain pasture, and his wife could live in the attic room and serve the Feland family. For them the big living-room and the two sleeping rooms would be put in order.

This proposal was very acceptable to Herr Feland and his wife, and, after looking over the little house, they decided to engage it for the Summer months of the coming year.

This news and the description of the beautiful fields and lofty snow-clad mountains, the green pastures and the numbers of grazing cows, had made a deep impression on the two children, and for a long time Rita had been hardly able to wait for the day to start on the journey. Even in Winter not a day had begun and hardly had one ended without Rita's asking:

"Mamma, will Summer come soon now?"

Now the Summer was really there, and Rita's question became more determined and urgent. Every morning in expectant tones sounded the words:

"When are we going to the Gemmi?"

Every day the child's impatience grew and these impetuous questions and pleadings increased, until Rita could hardly wait any longer to climb into the train and travel to the high mountains and green fields.

Finally the day came when the whole Feland house looked like a big annual fair. Every possible kind of clothing lay around in such piles in all the chambers that there was no more place to sit down. But, little by little, everything disappeared into three huge trunks, and two days later the whole Feland family were seated in the train: Ella in silent delight between her mamma and Fräulein Hohlweg; Rita next her papa, whom she embraced every moment in sheer delight, for now they

were really going on the great journey; now they were going to the Gemmi!

II

ON THE GEMMI PASS

Not far from the summit of the Gemmi Pass a narrow path enters the woods and soon leads to the place where the traveller cannot look without a shudder over the steep walls of rock down into the deep precipice.

One beautiful Summer evening a young boy was coming along this wood-path. In his hand he held a large red flower which he had found deep within the woods and looked at it wonderingly from time to time.

Then he came out of the woods into an open place and gazed around, but appeared to find nothing in particular to look at further, and continued his way. Then he stepped into a narrow field-path, leading to the left up a green slope. There stood two cottages not far apart, each with a small out-building behind it, evidently to shelter the animals. One of these sheds was larger than the other, and the cottage also with its brand new door looked more roomy and better kept. This belonged to the guide Kaspar, who lived in it together with his wife and two boys and every year was able to improve something about it, because he earned a good deal of money as guide to travellers. In his shed stood

not only two goats, like all the neighbors, but for the last two years a fine cow also, which furnished him with wonderful milk and butter.

The smaller cottage beyond with its old worm-eaten door and tumble-down shingle roof belonged to the porter, Martin, the big man, who, on account of his powerful build, was called "strong Martin." He lived there with his wife and four little children, and behind in his small shed stood his two goats, whose milk had to feed the whole family.

All through the Summer, especially in fine weather, strong Martin really had a good income; then he carried travellers' luggage over the Gemmi, but he didn't earn nearly so much as his neighbor Kaspar, who was often away many days at a time with the mountain climbers.

In front of the new house door Kaspar's two boys were now standing and were evidently discussing something very important. They were examining, handling and comparing, with great eagerness, two objects, which they held in their hands, and when at last they seemed to come to an agreement they began all over again. The little fellow, who had just come out of the woods to the cottage, now stood still and looked full of astonishment at what was going on in front of the house-door.

"Seppli, come, look! look!" called one of the two boys to him.

Seppli drew near; his eyes gazed in motionless amazement at what was shown him.

"See what Father brought us from the fair in

Berne," called the larger of the boys again to Seppli, and each one of them held up his present. What a wonderful sight was offered to Seppli's eyes! Chappi and Georgie each held in his hand a large whip, in this country called a *Geissel* or lash. The strong and yet pliable handle was wound round with little bands of red leather. The long white lash was of solid braided leather thongs; on the end hung a firmly twisted round cord of yellow silk with a little tassel at the end. This end, which could make a wonderful crack, was called the whip-lash. Seppli looked speechless at the whips. Never in his life had he seen anything so splendid!

" Now, just listen," said Chappi, beginning to swing his whip, and Georgie did the same, and then it cracked and thundered up and down the valley and resounded from all the mountains, so that it appeared to Seppli as if there was nothing grander and more wonderful in the whole world.

" If I only had a whip with a yellow lash too!" said he, taking a deep breath, when the two had finally stopped cracking theirs.

" Yes, you will have to wait for it," replied Chappi haughtily, and with one last tremendous crack he ran away; he had to show his whip to other people. Georgie ran behind him; but Seppli gazed after the two boys and remained motionless. A heavy weight had fallen on his untroubled heart. He had seen something which he yearned and longed for more than he had ever done before in all his life, and Chappi had said discouragingly:

"Yes, you will have to wait!" It seemed to Seppli exactly as if everything which could make him happy was lost for his whole life. He seized the red flower firmly and threw it away, for to have only a red flower and never, never to own a whip with a yellow lash turned Seppli against the flower; it flew far away into the field and Seppli looked after it in silent rage. No one knows how long he would have remained standing there if the door had not opened behind him and a woman stepped out with a big broom in her hand.

"Where are the boys, Seppli?" she asked curtly.

"Gone off with the whips," was the answer, for they were still before his eyes.

"Run and call them home, and be quick," commanded the woman. "To-morrow early they will have to go to the mountain, and this evening the gentleman is coming, and there is still much to be done. Run and tell them, Seppli!"

The youngster then ran with all his might in the direction where the two boys had disappeared. The woman began to work her broom into every corner and to sweep. She was Kaspar's wife and the mother of the two boys, Chappi and Georgie.

That morning a letter had come from Herr Feland announcing that he and his family would arrive the following evening,—hence the great preparation with the broom, which was not unnecessary, for Chappi and Georgie brought a great deal of dirt, with their big shoes, into the house. Now the two boys came running

along with a frightful cracking of whips, neighbor Seppli still behind them, for the sight of the whips drew him irresistibly along. But when their mother called the boys in, because they had to help with all sorts of work, Seppli finally turned and went over to his house, but very slowly, like one who bore a great trouble. And Seppli was bearing one, for the whips with the yellow lash hovered perpetually before his eyes, and besides he still heard Chappi's crushing words:

"Yes, you will have to wait!"

Over in front of the old house-door on the spot where the earth had been trodden down firmly for a threshing-floor, stood Father Martin striving with a heavy axe to split big knotty logs of wood into small pieces for the mother to lay on the hearth. In a row in front of their father stood Martheli, Friedli, and Betheli, with big, eager eyes, watching his work.

Seppli, the oldest, now came along, placed himself in the row, and opened his eyes wide, for wherever there was something to be seen he was always there. But soon his father pointed to the little pieces on the ground and said in a more gentle, friendly voice than one would have expected from such a big, strong man:

"Well, Seppli, take two at a time in your arms and carry them in to mother in the kitchen, so she can cook our potatoes for us."

Seppli did immediately as he was told, and the work helped him a little to forget his trouble. But later, when he lay beside Friedli in their little bed, he could

not go to sleep at once, as usual; the great hurt rose again before his eyes, and he had to sigh:

"Oh, if I only had a whip with a yellow lash!"

III

NEW ACQUAINTANCES

VERY early the following morning a great cracking of whips was heard, for at four o'clock Chappi and Georgie were already waiting in front of the cottage for the cows which were to be brought here from one place and another in order to drive them up on the mountain, where the big herd was. Then the two would remain up there as shepherd-boys until Autumn, and they were so delighted about it, they couldn't make enough noise; for to be up there together and have nothing to do the whole Summer but run around with their whips and with the cows, was to them a splendid prospect.

When their mother had fastened on their knapsacks and admonished them to be good boys, and they had gone away with their cows, she went back into the house, and then began a sweeping and dusting in every room and corner, from top to bottom, so there was no end to it the whole day long. The sun had already gone down behind the fir-trees when the woman once more wiped off the windows, one after another, and looked

around to see if everything was in order. Everything was shining, the windows all around the house, the table with the slate top, the benches against the walls, and even the floor.

The woman now saw a whole procession of porters, horses and riders coming up the path from the valley. She ran quickly up the narrow stairs to the attic chamber, put on a clean apron, and placed herself in the doorway in order to receive her strange guests. The procession stopped and Herr Feland lifted first his wife and Fräulein Hohlweg, then the children, from the horses.

Rita had hardly touched the ground when she ran to and fro for joy, and did not know which was the most beautiful, the tiny wooden cottage with the little bench in front of the door, the green fields around with the flowers and brooks, or the golden evening sunshine on the rocks and fir-trees. Everything was so new, so lovely! Ella, too, was quite filled with admiration, and looked around in silent astonishment.

Then their father and mother came into the cottage, and a new pleasure began for Rita, since everything here was so different from anything she had ever seen in her life before. She seized Ella by the hand and ran with her into every corner.

"See, see, there are seats all around the room against the wall, and just see where you can climb up."

Whereupon Rita ran quickly up the stairs, leading up behind the oven, to an opening through which the sleeping-room was entered. This was a wonderful dis-

covery! From there they went through an open door into another chamber, where two beds stood. This led into a little garret room and a wooden staircase on the other side went down again into the living-room. This made a wonderful circuit which could be made many times a day, and everything about the whole house, inside and out, looked so new and unusual and promised so much, Rita didn't know what she should enjoy the most.

When, at last, she lay in her big bed up-stairs in the chamber, and Ella in the one beside her, and their mother had said good-night to the children after their evening prayer, Rita drew a deep sigh and said with the greatest contentment:

"Oh, now we are on the Gemmi!"

The most beautiful Summer days now followed, with golden sunshine on the meadows, with cool breezes blowing up in the evergreen woods, and the deep blue sky, spread out above the rocks and the white, snow-capped mountains.

In a few days Ella and Rita had discovered all the lovely spots in the neighborhood, where they could lie down and spend the warm afternoon hours agreeably until evening, when a stroll was taken with their papa and mamma. But Rita was more inclined to discover lovely spots than to rest, and while Ella was sitting on the soft moss under the fir-trees or on the green meadow ground of the mountainside enjoying the thought that Fräulein Hohlweg was coming to read her a charming

story or tell one, Rita had always some new plan which she proceeded to carry out.

Meanwhile their mother sat in the house with their papa, and often had to lie down to rest, for her health was very frail.

When Rita saw Fräulein Hohlweg come out of the house with a big basket filled with knitting materials on her arm all kinds of delightful places immediately came to her mind, where they could go, and before Fräulein Hohlweg had seated herself Rita would tell her that she must go in right away to her papa, for she had a great deal to say to him. In a twinkling she was in the house, had jumped up on her papa's knee and was telling him a multitude of plans,—how they could climb to the fir-trees high up on the rocks and see far around, or go deep, deep into the woods, until they came to the big birds that often screamed so frightfully. Papa would listen to her daring proposals with interest, but thought there were shorter excursions to take near by and then would send her back to Ella and the Fräulein.

Rita had just come to her father's knee again. To-day she had a new proposal to make and it was very urgent.

"Oh, Papa, lay down your book for just a little minute," she begged. "I have something to tell you."

Her papa granted her request and listened attentively.

"See, Papa," continued Rita, "yesterday and again to-day, a little boy has been standing in front of the cottage, over there, and he opens his eyes wide and keeps

looking over here. I must really go over there and ask him why he does that and what his name is."

Papa agreed to this necessary errand, and Rita started off at once. Seppli had been standing over there in the same spot for an hour, gazing at the neighbor's house opposite, for since the strange people had come there was always something new and remarkable to see.

When Rita reached him she placed herself directly in front of him, and put her hands behind her, just as her papa did when he had something important to talk over with her mamma.

"What do you expect to see that you keep looking over there?" she asked.

"Nothing," replied Seppli.

This answer didn't seem quite satisfactory to Rita.

"Did you think we had a little boy, too, and did you want to see how he looked?" she continued.

"No," replied Seppli curtly.

"Perhaps you have forgotten what you expected to see," said Rita then, in order to explain the matter to herself and to Seppli.

"What is your name?"

"Seppli."

"How old are you?"

"Don't know."

"You must know. Come, stand beside me so ——" and Rita placed herself beside Seppli, and looked at him over her shoulder. He was a little shorter, but much more stoutly built than Rita.

"You are not so tall as I am," she said. "You are quite small. You see I shall be seven years old, for I was six years old on my birthday; that I know very well, because I had many presents. Perhaps you are six years old, because you are so small."

Seppli took this information without any doubt, for he did not know that he had been seven years old some time ago, and that he had grown more in breadth than in height.

"What do you do all day long, Seppli?" asked Rita.

Seppli had to think about it a long time. Finally he said:

"I know where there are red flowers."

This word fell like a burning spark into Rita's heart. Suddenly she saw a bush with flaming red roses somewhere in the woods, and everything in her longed for the wonderful flowers.

"Where, where? Seppli, where are the flowers? Come, let us go there quickly!" and Rita had already seized Seppli's hand and drawn him along. But Seppli followed rather slowly.

"There," he said, and pointed with his finger to the woods above.

"Oh, can you go there into the big forest?" said Rita expectantly, pulling Seppli along with all her might.

"Yes, and then still farther," replied Seppli deliberately and without hurrying his steps; he had heavy wooden shoes on his feet.

But Rita pulled Seppli still harder. She already saw the path through the dark woods before her, and behind the trees the big red flowers glowing and shimmering.

"Come, Seppli, come," she cried, and pulled him along still harder.

They now came past Kaspar's cottage. Her papa was standing in the doorway. He was looking to see why his little girl stayed away so long, for the visit granted must have come to an end by this time. Just as he stepped on the threshold the strange pair came along, Rita pulling Seppli after her with all her might.

"Here, here! Not so fast, little Grasshopper!" called her papa. "Come here! Where are you dragging your new friend?"

"Oh, Papa," cried Rita in great eagerness, "he knows where there are such beautiful red flowers in the forest; we are going to get them."

"No, no," said papa, taking Rita by the hand, "that won't do. We are going to walk with mamma now, and your little friend can get the flowers and bring them to you, then he shall have a nice piece of bread and butter."

Whereupon her papa led his child into the house and soon they all came out together again, father and mother, Fräulein Hohlweg, Ella and Rita, and walked along the sunlit mountain path down towards the valley.

Seppli remained standing in the same place until he could see nothing more of the company; then he turned around and went back to his own house.

IV

A TERRIBLE NIGHT

On the following day, about the time when Frau Feland had to take her usual rest, Fräulein Hohlweg came with her big basket to a lovely, shady spot near the house, to spend the pleasant hour knitting and reading. Ella sat quietly on her mossy seat, and Rita stood in front of her, telling with great enthusiasm about a bush in the woods, with flaming red flowers, which shone far away through the trees. Her eyes grew bigger and brighter every moment, for the more she talked about it the more plainly she saw it all before her, and it seemed as if she were already on the path in the midst of the woods.

Fräulein Hohlweg put aside her big basket and said:

"Sit down now, Rita, and be quiet. I have something lovely to read to you."

But Rita was so full of her flowers and the woods, and all the things she saw before her eyes, that the command was forgotten.

"I must go right away to Papa. I have so much to tell him!" protested Rita, and ran to the house. It was the same thing that happened every day. Rita always thought of something very important to tell her papa, when she should have been sitting down. To-day she had something even more urgent than usual. When a

long time had passed and the child did not return, Fräulein Hohlweg became uneasy and said:

"Go in quickly, Ella, and call Rita, so that she will not wake Mamma. Papa must have gone already, for he said at the table that he was going for a long walk."

Ella ran in, but did not come back for so long that Fräulein Hohlweg went in too. It was perfectly still in the house. No one was in the living-room, no one in the kitchen! Fräulein went up the little staircase and softly opened the door of the children's room. No one was there! Through the open door she could see into the parents' room. Frau Feland was lying with closed eyes on her bed; she was alone in the room.

Fräulein Hohlweg came out again. Then Ella came up from below and told her she had searched for Rita in the whole house, in every corner, at last even in the yard back of the wood and in the little room belonging to Kaspar's wife, but Rita was nowhere to be found.

Fräulein ran down the stairs to the shed; there she got some information. Kaspar's wife was standing inside spreading the straw for the goats. When questioned about little Rita, she replied only that she had seen the child come into the house not long before. But where could Rita have gone afterwards? Fräulein Hohlweg and Ella began to search through the whole house once more, then all around it in every nook and corner. Kaspar's wife helped willingly for she saw that Fräulein felt a real anxiety; but nowhere was there any trace of the child to be seen. Kaspar's wife ran over to the

neighbor's house, perhaps they had seen Rita, but no one was there, the door was closed, everything still. Then it came to the woman's mind that Martin was making hay to-day, high up on the rocks, and that the whole household had gone with him. She came back with this information. Fräulein Hohlweg was usually of a timid nature, and now she became more and more uneasy.

"Oh, if I had only gone after the child right away!" she exclaimed regretfully a hundred times, but this was of no use. What was to be done? Where should they look for Rita? Could she, perhaps, have gone after the people up to the rocks, with the little boy, with whom she had been seen the day before? The more she thought about this the more likely it seemed to her. If only there was some one to send up there immediately, she thought, before her mother had to be told about the matter.

The obliging woman offered to do this and to come back again as soon as possible, but it was a long and toilsome way; it would take more time than one would think from looking up there.

Fräulein Hohlweg promised her a handsome reward if she would only go and prevent Frau Feland from being frightened, and she was very hopeful that she would surely bring Rita back home with her. But the way was farther than Fräulein had thought, and long before the messenger could return Frau Feland came down from her room and wished to take a walk with the children. Then everything had to be told her.

At the first great shock the mother wanted to go out herself at once, to look for the child and see where she could be, but Fräulein was so sure that Rita must have run off with the little boy that Frau Feland calmed herself and decided to wait for the return of Kaspar's wife. She really didn't have a peaceful moment. She ran from one window to the other then back to the door, and then around the house. The time seemed so long to her,—so long!

At last, after two weary hours, the woman came back, panting and glowing from the heat, but—she came alone, without Rita. Martin had gone up to the rocks, with his whole family early in the morning to make hay, and had remained there. No one had seen the child since the day before. Moreover, along the way the woman had asked for her, here and there, but no trace of her was to be found.

Then the mother broke out into loud lament.

"Oh, if only my husband were here!" she cried. "Where shall we find people to hunt for the child? What must we do? Kind woman, what can we do?"

The woman offered to run around in the huts and summon the people to start out to search before it should be dark; they would have to go up along by the forest-brook, and into the forest.

"If only they hadn't all gone up to make hay," she complained, but she started off immediately. Ella, who now realized what might have happened to Rita, began to weep bitterly.

" Oh, Mamma, if Rita has fallen into the brook, which roars so frightfully, or if she went into the woods and can't find her way!" she sobbed. " Oh, let us go right into the woods. She will surely be so frightened!"

These were also the mother's thoughts. She took Ella by the hand and hurried up to the woods, faster than she was able to go at ordinary times. Fräulein Hohlweg ran behind her, for she hardly knew what she was doing she was so anxious.

One hour after another passed. Women and children ran, searching everywhere, but no trace of Rita was discovered. Night came on.

Frau Feland, all the while holding fast to Ella's hand, had been running in every direction through thickets and underbrush, until now she could run no more. She returned with Ella to the house and fell, completely exhausted. Fräulein Hohlweg, who had followed in her footsteps, stood breathless, looking as if she too were near collapsing. Ella sat still, weeping, beside her mother.

Then Herr Feland came back. When he learned in a few words from his wife what had happened, he first of all carried her up to her sleeping-room and told her to remain perfectly quiet, that he would do everything to find the child. Fräulein Hohlweg and Ella, he said, must go to bed. As soon as he had found Rita he would let them know.

Then Herr Feland went over to Martin's cottage, for his first thought, too, was that Rita had gone away

with her new friend of the day before. Martin was just coming out of the door. He had already heard that a child was lost and was just coming to try to help. To Herr Feland's questions he replied how, since early in the morning, he had been away with his wife and children, and that the little girl had not been seen at all by them.

Herr Feland now thought Rita must have gone away alone, either as she had proposed to him, somewhere up on the rocks, or deep into the forest. So he ordered Martin immediately to get together all the men in the neighborhood, provide them with good lanterns, and have some of them climb up to the high cliffs and hunt around everywhere and others go through the woods in every direction. These last Herr Feland himself would join, and he was determined to continue the search until the child was found.

So the men started off into the night, and Frau Feland heard one hour after another strike on the old wall-clock down-stairs, but the night passed away more slowly, more lingeringly than any she had watched through in all her life. She did not close her eyes. At every distant sound that fell on her ear she jumped up and said to herself:

"Now they are coming and bringing the child! But will she be alive or dead?"

But they did not come. From time to time Ella would come tiptoeing in softly. She wanted to see if her mother was asleep, for through her anxiety she

could find no rest either. When she found that her mother also was awake, she would ask again and again:

"Oh, Mamma, shall we not pray once more that the dear Lord will take care of Rita and bring her home again soon?"

Her mother assented willingly each time, and then Ella would kneel down beside her bed and pray and beseech the dear Lord to protect Rita from all harm and to show her papa the way to her. Then Ella would go back quietly to her room.

The night passed. The beaming sun was already rising behind the mountains and lighted up the woods and meadows, as if it had great joy to announce.

Frau Feland sank back exhausted on her pillow. Finally weariness overcame trouble and care. A quiet slumber snatched the anxious mother away for a short time from torturing suspense and waiting.

V

THE NEXT MORNING

Pale and worried, Herr Feland came through the golden morning light back to his house, and his clothes showed that he had pressed through many thorns and prickly briers. Frau Feland had immediately heard his footsteps and full of anguish called:

"Are you bringing the child?"

He stepped nearer, sat down by the bed, laid his head in his hands and said, almost inaudibly:

"I come alone. I can no longer hope, no longer think. In what condition shall we find the child after the long night, wholly or half dead?"

"Oh, no, Papa," sobbed Ella, who had come in softly, "the dear Lord has surely taken care of our Rita, for Mamma and I have prayed to Him so many times in the night about it."

Her father rose. "We have gone through the forest in every direction all night long; the child cannot be there. Now we will go down through the ravine by the forest-brook."

Her father spoke these words in a trembling voice. The supposition that the child had fallen into the wild forest-brook became more and more certain to him. Herr Feland had arranged for a good breakfast to be prepared for the men at Martin's house, and then they were all to help further in the search. Now it was plain that they would be better able to climb down into the ravines and gorges.

When Herr Feland entered Martin's house the men were still sitting at the table and talking excitedly about what to do next. Seppli was standing by his father staring with open eyes and mouth.

Herr Feland sat down beside Martin. A silence ensued, for they all saw what great anguish and trouble were in his heart. Suddenly Seppli said bluntly:

"I know where she is."

"Don't talk such nonsense, Seppli," said his father reprovingly in his gentle way; "you were up in the hayfield when she was lost; you can't know anything about it."

Herr Feland asked for ropes and other necessary things, and while these were being made ready Seppli said half-aloud but quite distinctly:

"But I really know where she is."

Herr Feland rose, seized him by the hand, and said kindly:

"Little boy, look at me, and tell me truly, do you know anything about the child?"

"Yes," was the short answer.

"Then speak out, little boy! Have you seen the child? Where has she gone?" asked Herr Feland with increasing excitement.

"I will show you," replied Seppli, and went to the door. They all rose. They all looked at one another. No one knew whether to take the suggestion seriously or as foolish.

But Herr Feland followed the boy without any hesitation.

"Seppli, Seppli," said Father Martin reprovingly, "I really think you are making a promise you can't keep."

But Seppli kept trotting along, Herr Feland following, and the men coming reluctantly after.

When the little fellow aimed for the forest they stood still, and one of them said:

"It is utterly useless to follow the boy in there, for we have searched through every place and found nothing. We will not go."

Martin informed Herr Feland that he himself did not have any confidence in the boy. But Seppli kept marching along, and Herr Feland and Martin decided to follow.

Seppli walked resolutely on farther into the woods. Suddenly he turned to the left towards the old fir-trees, where they soon saw something red gleaming through. Seppli steered straight ahead, through the midst of briers and prickly thistles, to a light spot, where there were many large bushes together, all covered with red flowers. Here he stood still and looked around a little puzzled. He had evidently expected to find Rita there. Then he went with determination on his way.

The blossoming bushes became fewer, but larger and larger. Seppli stood still by each one for a moment and looked around, then he would go on, always to the left.

"No, Seppli, don't go any farther," cried his father. "We are coming to the big wall of rock."

But at the same moment there was a shining like fire through the trees. The sun glowed on a bush completely covered with the red flowers. Seppli ran up to it quickly, but he was close to the wall of rock, which extended, rugged and steep, down to the deep precipice below. Seppli looked around and across the flowers down over the rocks. Then he turned around. Herr

Feland stood hopeless behind him. The path came to an end, and the child was not found!

Martin seized the boy by the hand and tried to draw him back from the dangerous spot, when Seppli said in his dry way:

"She is lying down there below."

Herr Feland rushed forward and bent over the precipice—his face grew deathly pale. He stepped back and had to cling to the nearest tree, his knees were shaking so. He beckoned to Martin, who was still holding Seppli fast by the hand. Then he stepped to the edge and looked down into the depths. Here and there a few bushes hung over the precipice. In one place, horribly low down, the rock had one small projection, like a narrow shelf. Here lay, nestled on the rock, a motionless little being, with her face pressed against the stone.

"God in Heaven, it is true, there she lies!" said Martin shuddering, "but whether living or ——"

He did not finish the sentence. One look at Herr Feland closed his lips. He looked as if he were going to drop dead. But he recovered himself.

"Martin," he said faintly, "no time is to be lost. If the child moves she will be over the precipice. Who will climb down? Who will get her?"

The other men now came along: hopeless, they had followed their little guide through curiosity. They too now looked, one after another, down the wall of rock.

"Listen, you men," said Herr Feland in a trembling

voice, " there is not a moment to lose. Who will do it? Who will help? Who dares to go? "

The men looked at one another, but all remained silent. One of them stepped to the edge, looked down, then turned around, shrugged his shoulders, and went away.

" If we were only sure that she is still alive," said another. " But a man risks his life and perhaps only to bring back a dead child."

" Who knows that she is not alive? " cried Herr Feland, almost beside himself, " and if she stirs she is lost beyond recovery! Oh, is it not possible? "

" She would have gone down below long before this if she was still alive. No one could lie as still as that," said another. " And, sir, if one should roll down there, the best reward would be of no use."

Shrugging their shoulders, one after another stepped back. Herr Feland looked around him in despair. There was no prospect of help.

" I will do it myself," he exclaimed, beside himself; " only tell me how? "

Martin now stepped up to him.

" No, sir," he said quietly, " that will not do. Then both would be lost, that is sure. But I will do it, with God's help. I, too, have such little ones, and I know how hard it must be for Herr Feland."

Even before he spoke he had fastened the big rope around the trunk of the old fir-tree, for he had decided to bring up the child to her father, whether she was

dead or alive. Then he took off his cap, prayed softly, seized firm hold of the rope, and slid down the rock.

He reached the little shelf in the rock. With one hand he held to the rope with all his strength; with his bare feet he tried to cling fast to the rock, in order to be able to seize the child with his other hand and lift her up. Gently, quietly, he drew near, for if the child was alive and should be startled by him—just a quick movement—even at the last moment she would be lost.

She lay motionless there. Martin bent over the child and laid his broad, strong hand on her. At the same moment she was about to turn around quickly and would have fallen down beyond recovery, but Martin's hand lay firmly on her. She could turn her head. A pair of big, wondering eyes looked up at the man.

"God be praised and thanked!" said Martin, taking a deep breath. "Say the same, little one, if you can still speak!"

"Yes, I can still speak! God be praised and thanked!" said the child, in a quite clear voice.

Martin looked in greatest amazement at the child, who was wholly unharmed.

"You must be strangely dear to our Lord, for He has worked a miracle for you. You must never forget it all your life long, little one," he said thoughtfully. Then he lifted the child with his strong right hand up to himself.

"There, now you must put both your arms around my neck, very tight, as if I were your dear papa, for

you see, I cannot hold you. I have enough to do, with both my hands, to climb up."

"Yes, yes, I will hold fast," said Rita assuringly and clasping Martin so firmly that he could hardly breathe. But how glad he was!

He now began to climb up the rock. It was no easy task. The blood ran down from his hands and feet. Occasionally he had to rest for a moment. Above stood Herr Feland and the men holding their breath and watching the man sway above the precipice. Would his endurance hold out? Would he come up? Or would he lose his strength? Would he slip and fall with the child into the dark abyss?

Nearer and nearer they came—now only the last frightful steep piece of rock—there——

"God be thanked!" cried Martin, breathless, when he took the last step over the edge. He took the child from his neck and laid her in her trembling father's arms.

Herr Feland had to sit down. He held his child and looked at her, speechless, as if he could not realize his good fortune.

"Oh, Papa, I am so glad!" said Rita, throwing both arms around his neck affectionately. "I knew you would surely come to get me in the morning."

Martin stepped aside, with folded hands; he was gazing at the father and his child, and for joy the tears fell down over his sunburned cheeks. Seppli had pressed close to him and clung to him fast, for he had realized that his father had been in great danger.

Then Herr Feland, with his child in his arms, stepped up to Martin. He held out his hand to the rescuer.

"You know very well, Martin, that I am now doing what I should have done before anything else," he said in a trembling voice. "I thank you, as only one can thank another, to whom a life has been given back. I shall never forget that you risked your life to save my child."

The two men shook hands, and Martin said sincerely:

"It is a great reward to me that I was able to bring back your little girl to you unharmed."

"I will see you again to-day. Now we must go to the mother," said Herr Feland, and, holding his little girl fast in his arms, he started on the way back. Martin, holding Seppli by the hand, and the others followed.

As they were going along in this way through the woods, Martin said to his little boy:

"Now tell me, Seppli, how you knew that the little girl had come just here?"

"Because she wanted to go to the red flowers," replied Seppli.

"But how did you know then that she could be right there by the rock?"

"Because she was not by the first bush, so she must have gone farther, because the flowers keep getting more and more beautiful, and the most beautiful bush of all is the last near the rock. But I didn't know that she had fallen off," explained Seppli.

Herr Feland now reached his house. He went in and

opened the door of the sleeping-room. Ella was still sitting by the bed and holding her mother's hand fast. Quite exhausted, she was leaning her head on the pillow and her eyes were closed. Herr Feland stepped up to her mother and placed Rita in the middle of her bed.

"Good-morning, Mamma! Did you sleep well?" said Rita quite gayly, as she did every morning when she came to kiss her mother. Her mother opened her eyes and stared at her child. Then she suddenly seized her in her arms, pressed her with all her might to her breast, and tears of unspeakable joy streamed from her eyes. She couldn't speak a word, could only thank the dear Lord again and again in her heart.

Ella held her little sister's hand fast and kept saying over and over:

"Are you back again, Rita? Where were you all night long alone?"

Little by little her father told how and where he had found Rita and how Martin risked his life to save the child. The mother shuddered at the description. She pressed the child again close to her when she realized the danger she had been in the whole night long.

"Oh, weren't you frightened almost to death?" asked Ella, who from sympathy was still struggling with her tears.

"Oh no, I was not frightened," asserted Rita gayly. "I will tell you now how it happened. At first I was going in to ask Papa if I might go with Seppli for the red flowers, but he was away. So I thought he would

surely allow me, because I had wanted so much to go the day before, and then did not dare, so I went for Seppli, but he was away too. Then I thought I would find the red flowers alone, for Seppli had told me the way to go there.

"Then I went up into the woods and hunted a long, long time without finding them. But suddenly I saw something red shining behind the trees and I ran towards it. At first there were only a few flowers and not very bright red ones, but Seppli had said you had to go farther and farther into the woods. So I went still farther, and there were more and more flowers, and at last I came to a big, big bush with so many beautiful red flowers. They shone so wonderfully and I wanted them all, every one, and then suddenly I fell down and rested on a stone, but it was a small stone and so I pushed back against the rock and thought I would just lie still and Papa would soon come and get me. But then I was tired—and it was already getting rather dark—and I thought I must really go to sleep, and in the morning Papa would come and get me. Then I thought I must say my prayer, so that the dear Lord would send His little angels to take care of me while I slept, and I prayed:

"Oh, gentle Jesus, hear me!
On bright wings hover near me,
And keep me from all harm!
Thru danger, pain and sorrow
I'll sleep until the morrow,
Protected by Thine arm.

"Then I slept very well, until a man came, and I knew right away that Papa had sent him."

Her mother trembled as she followed the story. Her father could not conceal his delight at it.

"Now my little Grasshopper doesn't go another step alone," he said in as severe a tone as in his delight he could find it in his heart to use.

The mother had not yet heard who had finally taken the searching party to the right spot, and she wanted to know all about it. Then the father remembered about Seppli and that the boy was really the first one to trace Rita.

"We must especially reward the brave boy," he said, and Rita, who grasped this idea with enthusiasm, immediately scrambled down from the bed, in order to carry out the plan at once.

But what should the reward for Seppli be? What could she take to him right away?

"He shall for once have his greatest wish," said her father. "We will see what will most delight his heart."

"Can I go to him right away?" asked Rita eagerly.

Her papa wished to go with her, to speak with Father Martin at once, and also to recompense the other men. Rita jumped all around the room for joy. She was full of great gratitude to Seppli.

"But, Papa, supposing he should wish for a menagerie, with the biggest animals there are?" she asked.

"Then he shall have it," was the decided answer.

"But, Papa," she asked again, "if he should wish for a Turkish costume and a curved saber besides, such as Cousin Karl has?"

"He shall have that too!" was the answer.

"But, Papa," she went on, "if he should want a whole big fortress and twelve boxes full of soldiers, as Karl has?"

"He shall have them!" replied her father again.

Then Rita rushed out to Seppli, who was standing in front of the door.

"Come, Seppli," she cried, "now you can have the very best wish you can think of!"

Seppli looked at Rita with wrinkled brow. It seemed as if her words had awakened something that lay heavy on his heart. Finally he said, quite cast down:

"It's no use."

"Yes, really, it is, too," replied Rita, "because you found me you can ask for anything you would like, and you will have it. Papa said so. Now think right away about it and then tell what it is."

Gradually Seppli seemed to understand the matter. He looked at Rita once more to prove whether she was really in earnest or not, then he took a deep breath and said:

"A whip with a yellow lash."

"No, Seppli, that is nothing at all," replied Rita quite vexed. "You mustn't wish for anything like that. Think once more what is the most beautiful thing of all and wish for that."

Seppli thought obediently, took another deep breath, and said:

" A whip with a yellow lash."

Herr Feland then came with the men out of the house. The men went away with many expressions of gratitude, but Martin remained standing in the doorway.

" I have not yet given you any reward, Martin," said Herr Feland. " To you above all the rest I must prove my gratitude in a way to give you a real joy. Tell me, have you some special desire? "

Martin turned his cap around for a while in his hands, then said hesitatingly:

" I have had a great desire for a long time, but I dare not tell you what it is; no, no, it should not have come into my mind."

" Speak it out fully," said Herr Feland encouragingly, " perhaps I can help you."

" I have always thought," continued Martin, hesitatingly, " if I could only get on as well as my neighbor over there, I would venture to think of buying a cow. I have quite a good deal of hay and then could take care of my family without any anxiety."

" That is good, Martin," said Herr Feland, " we shall see each other again." Then he took Rita by the hand and started with her on the way back.

" And what did your friend Seppli wish for? " he asked.

" Oh, he is stupid," exclaimed Rita. " He only wants

a whip with a yellow lash! Why that is just nothing at all."

"Surely that is something," asserted her papa. "You see, every child has his own pleasures: to Seppli such a whip would give exactly as much pleasure as the most beautiful doll-house would to you."

At this explanation Rita seemed contented and could hardly wait for the wishes to come true.

On the following day Herr Feland had to make a journey down into the valley. Rita knew very well why, and hopped with delight all the morning long. Her papa did not go, without impressing it upon his little "grasshopper" that she must not take a step alone away from the house, and Fräulein Hohlweg received strict instructions. But she had endured such anguish that terrible night that the warnings were unnecessary. On the contrary she had determined from now on not to take her eyes away from Rita, no matter how hard it might be.

Two days later, when Martin had just sat down with his family at the table to their meal of steaming potatoes, they heard a loud mooing in front of the house—then again, and then a third time!

"Kaspar's cow must have run away," said Martin, getting up to go and catch her. Seppli had to go too! He ran hurriedly after his father. Martheli, Friedli and Bertheli followed, and behind them their mother, in order to fetch them all back again.

Outside Father Martin was standing in motionless

astonishment, and all the others beside him opened their eyes wide. The mother, who had just come along, clapped her hands and couldn't speak a word from amazement. Fastened near the house stood a glossy brown cow, so big and splendid, such as was only seen occasionally among the rich peasants. To one of her horns was fastened a big whip, which had a strong, white, leather mesh with a thick, silk lash which shimmered in the sun like gold!

A paper was bound around the whip-handle and on this was written in large letters: " For Seppli."

Martin took down the whip and gave it to the boy.

" It is yours," he said.

Seppli held the whip in his hand. The most beautiful and the most wonderful thing he could think of was his very own! And, besides, there was the cow, which could be driven up on the mountain, with the whip to crack, like Georgie's and Chappi's!

Seppli, with beaming eyes, seized his whip, hugged it and held it fast, as if to say:

" No power on earth can take it from me! "

Martin and his wife couldn't look enough at the splendid animal. That it was to belong to them appeared to them like a miracle.

Finally Martin said:

" She moos because she wants to give her milk. Seppli, bring the pail; to-day we will enjoy ourselves."

Two large pails were filled with foaming, fresh milk and placed with the potatoes on the table; then all ac-

companied the brown cow in a triumphant procession to the shed.

Over in front of the neighboring cottage Herr Feland was standing with his children. They wanted to see how the brown cow was received, and Rita had, above all, to know what impression the whip would make, which she herself had marked with the big letters: " For Seppli."

When Frau Feland had recovered from the great excitement the whole family went up to the wall of rock in order to give praise and thanks from their full hearts once more to the dear Lord, on the very spot where He had so evidently spread His protecting hand over their child.

Miller & Rhoads
RICHMOND, VA.

7615 H8